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[FATHER AND DAUGHTER.]

A LIFE AT STAKE.

BY LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Offend her, and she knows not to forgive.

Pope.

FROM the moment of the destruction of the document that had so nearly proved fatal to him and his, Sir Allyn Dare seemed to gather about him the strength and manliness that for years had been laid aside as a useless garment. No longer oppressed with the fact that he had reared a monument against himself by his weakness and folly that would bear record against him, he shook off the illness that had been more mental than physical, and stood erect, with something of the spirit that had so nobly distinguished the family of Dare.

Ilde beheld the change in him with delight.

"My darling," he said to her, when Lady Chellis's carriage had borne their preserver from Edencourt—and his tones were fuller and richer than they had been for years—"you have borne my burden too long. From this moment I am your protector and my own."

"Dear papa!" whispered Ilde, her hazel eyes shining lovingly through a glittering shower of tears.

"Our dangers are not over yet, my daughter," said Sir Allyn, solemnly, "but at last I can meet my enemy upon more equal ground. Years ago, Ilde, I confided the whole story to my lawyer, and he told me that so long as that written compact was in existence I had best submit to Therwell's demands. But I am innocent, Ilde, and that innocence may perhaps now be made manifest, although three false witnesses are ready to swear away my life. I intend to brave Therwell. You shall not be sacrificed to him!"

"But—but the trial, papa?"

"I have faith that a clever lawyer may confound the witnesses, now that their chief evidence is destroyed. I have faith in an over-ruling Providence that the

right will triumph over the wrong. In the meantime I shall show no more weakness and fear. It is not proper that the cares of the household should fall upon you alone. You have nobly sustained the heavy burden for a long time, but I have awakened at last, and shall relieve you of it. The master of Edencourt should not be hidden away in an upper chamber while his enemy assumes the part of proprietor."

"But you are ill, father."

"I am no longer ill, my darling," and the baronet smiled fondly upon her. "I feel as if I had obtained a new lease of life. The blood bounds more quickly in my veins, my brain is clearer than it has been for years, and a heavy weight has been lifted from my heart. Whatever comes now, I have strength to bear it. We ought to celebrate our brightening fortunes. Have the state drawing-room opened, Ilde, and dress yourself as if for a festival. We will go down and meet Therwell!"

There was no tremulousness now in his voice as he spoke of his enemy. His nervousness, that once had so alarmed his devoted daughter, had given place to a subdued joy, which beamed in his eyes, quivered in his lips, and ran steadily through his tones.

Ilde proceeded to carry out his wishes. She rang the bell and ordered the drawing-room to be thrown open, and, after other directions to the wondering attendant, hastened to Miss Arsdale's chamber and communicated to her the joyful event of the morning.

She then retired to her own room and made her festival toilet.

An hour later, radiant in a fleecy, floating robe of pure white, that seemed a mass of airy puffs, with her arms and neck wreathed about with strings of milk-white pearls, and with kindred jewels wound in and out among the rippling curls of her brown hair, Ilde tapped lightly at her father's door, and was granted admittance.

Sir Allyn had thrown aside his dressing-gown at last, and was attired in black. To his daughter's admiring gaze, he had never looked so noble or so handsome as now, with his gentle face flushed, his

eyes glowing, and his manner full of unusual decision.

If she admired him, what words could speak the loving, ardent emotion that flooded his heart as he looked upon her radiant young loveliness and remembered that she had been ready to sacrifice all that made life bright to insure his honourable reputation and happiness? He looked at her a moment as if she had been an angel visitant, and then, without a word, he impressed a lingering kiss upon her pure brow and breathed a silent blessing upon her.

"Let us go down now, papa," said the maiden, taking his arm. "Kate is already in the drawing-room."

They quitted the chamber, passed down the grand staircase, and made their way through the principal hall to the state drawing-room. The servants were loitering in the hall, who regarded their master with wide-open eyes, the rumour having been circulated that he was at the point of death; but the bow and smile he bestowed upon each was quite sufficient to convince them of his restoration to health, and they speedily disappeared to circulate the wonderful and joyful news.

The state drawing-room was worthy of its title. It was a long and wide apartment, with a lofty, carved ceiling, and with plainly painted walls, which served as a background for magnificent pictures. There was a deep bay-window, a glorious nook of light, divided from the room by softly falling curtains of rich lace which were looped up on either side by cords and tassels of bullion. Within the recesses were soft Moorish cushions, and a wide, luxurious couch, that tempted the observer to dreamy ease.

In the room itself was garnered everything that a Sybaritic taste could demand—soft velvet carpets of the most exquisite colouring, silken couches, deep fauteuils, inlaid tables laden with rare curiosities, delicate vases, that were miracles in themselves, and a host of dainty trifles that took away all gloominess from the grandeur of the apartment and gave instead an air of graceful beauty.

The soft morning sunlight filtered in through the



filmy curtains of the great bay-window, and the odour of flowers that crowded the vases filled the air with delicious perfume. Artificial heat that gave the room the temperature of summer crept up through invisible tubes, and completed the charm of the scene.

Kate Arsdale was standing at the window when father and daughter entered, but she hastened to greet them, and to congratulate Sir Allyn upon his present happiness. In return he thanked her for her devotion to Ilde, and pressed a fatherly kiss upon her fair face.

"It is a long time since I visited this room," he said, pausing near the centre of the apartment and leaning upon the back of a chair, while he glanced up and down the pleasant scene. "A long, long time," and he sighed as he remembered that no company had been gathered there since his late father's death. "Ilde, love, had you not better request Therwell's presence?" he added, banishing his sadness and recalling his present joy.

Ilde was about to act upon the suggestion when the door opened abruptly, and Therwell entered their presence.

Since Lady Chellis's departure he had been carefully walking about the lawn, and had witnessed the signs of occupation about the long-unused drawing-room. Curious to know if it were being prepared for the approaching marriage, which had been appointed for the following day, he had come to look and make inquiries of the servants whom he supposed to be there.

His astonishment may be imagined at the scene which met his gaze.

Sir Allyn standing erect, with a bright, frank face and a joyous smile, his cares apparently laid aside with his ordinary garments; Ilde radiantly lovely in her tulle robe, her beauty enhanced by her simple pearl ornaments; Kate Arsdale also in gala dress; and the three bright figures surrounded by warmth, light, and perfume.

It was not to be wondered at that he paused on the threshold, mute with surprise, his glance wandering from one to another of the little group.

"Enter, Mr. Therwell," said Sir Allyn, with a stately bend of the head. "I was about to send for you."

"What does all this mean?" cried Therwell, wonderingly, recovering his voice. "Have you all mistaken the day of the marriage? I said to-morrow, and the licence—"

"Never mind the licence, Mr. Therwell," interrupted Sir Allyn, quietly. "It will not be needed."

"Not be needed," exclaimed the ex-secretary, now observing more particularly the singular change that had come over the man who had been so recently his victim. "It strikes me, Sir Allyn Dare, that you are very independent all at once. Do you imagine that I am going to let you escape me? What does all this mummery of flowers and gay dresses mean? Are you rehearsing your parts for to-morrow, or," he added, with a sneer, "do you purpose making a tragic ending to your lives?"

"It means," responded Sir Allyn, in a firm, stern voice, "that your hold upon me has ended at last. I am free from your toils, Vincent Therwell, and at last defy your malice."

Therwell's round face paled visibly, and wild thoughts pursued themselves through his mind. Had Mrs. Amry survived and returned to denounce him? he asked himself, with shuddering fear. But that, he assured himself, was improbable. Had Headley betrayed him for a higher bribe? Had Shawcross, of the search for whom he had privately informed himself, been discovered? and had he yielded to the prayers and promises of the devoted daughter?

His last surmise appeared the least unlikely.

"You have heard from Shawcross?" he said, in a perceptibly changed voice. "Let me tell you that his evidence won't benefit you, Sir Allyn Dare, so long as a certain document remains in existence."

"I have not heard from Shawcross," replied Sir Allyn, calmly.

"It is Headley, then, who has played me false?"

The baronet answered smilingly in the negative.

Therwell was about to ask a third question, but he could not summon sufficient courage to mention Mrs. Amry's name, or to acknowledge an acquaintance with her. He therefore said, gruffly:

"Whoever has been deluding you with false hopes, Sir Allyn Dare, I neither know nor care. I am witness enough against you in myself, particularly when we take into consideration a certain written compact which was so worded as to appear an acknowledgment of an awful crime."

"True, Mr. Therwell," returned Sir Allyn, quietly, "you were to be feared so long as that document remained in existence. But it is now destroyed. I burned it an hour ago with my own hands."

Therwell started, and uttered an incredulous exclamation.

"If your independence be founded upon such an idea," he said, sneeringly, after a moment's reflection, "you can undecieve yourself, and the sooner the better. That paper is hidden where you could not find it if you were to search for a century. You have never heard the name of the person who guards it, and the residence of that person is equally unknown."

"Perhaps not so much as Mr. Therwell thinks," said Ilde, a half-smile playing about her mouth. "The guardian of the paper was Mrs. Maria Garson, your sister, who lives in a lonely stone house close by the sea."

He interrupted her with a muttered imprecation. Without noticing the interruption, she continued: "The hiding-place of the document was a little square nook in the chimney of an upper chamber. The paper was deposited in a box which had a false bottom—"

Therwell uttered a hoarse, wild cry that rang through the apartment like the howl of a wild beast.

"It is true, then?" he cried. "The paper is found and burnt?"

"Yes, thank heaven!" said Sir Allyn, with a reverent glance upwards. "The compact which I signed in a moment of weakness and despair has been consumed."

We will not pollute these columns by transcribing the curses and ravings to which the baffled man gave utterance. His strongest hold upon Sir Allyn had given way, and he almost foamed at the mouth in his wild disappointment and still wilder rage. The mystery enveloping the affair enhanced his fury. The blandness and smoothness that had heretofore distinguished him was thrown off like a thin outside glaze, and he was revealed in all the deformity of his nature. He cursed his sister for betraying him, and he heaped imprecations upon himself for not having compelled the marriage within twenty-four hours after his arrival at Edencourt.

Shuddering and alarmed, Ilde hid her head in her father's bosom, and shut out from her hearing Therwell's wild words. Kate Arsdale retired to the bay-window, where only an incoherent sound reached her. But Sir Allyn, feeling his daughter within his arms, stood his ground, and regarded his enemy with a quiet smile that was infinitely more irritating than words.

Looking up, when the first outburst of his fury had begun to subside, Therwell met that calm smile, and lashed himself into even wilder rage.

"You will find that you are not yet free, Sir Allyn Dare," he cried. "I have witnesses to prove your guilt. If you refuse to allow this marriage to go on, you will sleep in a felon's cell to-night."

"I do refuse to allow it to proceed," declared Sir Allyn, decidedly. "And more—I order you to quit my house immediately."

This order sobered Therwell completely. He looked at his recent victim as if paralyzed at his unexpected audacity, as indeed he was. He had been so long accustomed to regard the baronet as a weak, womanish, spiritless creature that he now found it difficult to comprehend him in his new character. But as he saw how radical was the change in Sir Allyn he laughed and said:

"So I am ordered to go, am I? And Lord Tressilian is coming to take my place, I suppose? Your new airs won't help you, Sir Allyn. Here I am and here I shall stay until you go forth to prison or I go to the village church with your daughter."

The baronet made a movement towards the bell-pull, as if about to have him ejected from the mansion. He had taken but a few steps, after releasing Ilde from his clasp, when the drawing-room door again opened and two persons made their appearance.

The first of these was a veiled woman. The second was a small, spectacled gentleman, who was the perfect type of a country physician.

The first of the newcomers glanced quickly around the apartment, and then flung back the thick lace veil concealing her features—disclosing the face of Mrs. Amry.

At sight of her Therwell sank quietly into a chair, as pale and almost as cold as a statue.

Ilde recognized her with a cry of joy.

"Am I too late, Miss Dare?" cried the strange seamstress, her gaze resting upon Ilde's attire. "You are not married?"

"No, I am not married," replied Ilde.

Mrs. Amry drew a long breath of thankfulness and exclaimed:

"I have, then, come in time to keep my promise and save you from a marriage with Vincent Therwell, Miss Dare. I should have been here before but for illness. I followed you to your garden the other evening to speak with you alone, but concealed my-

self among the bushes when Therwell joined you. When you had retired I tried to steal after you unseen, but he detected me and stabbed me that I might not betray a secret of his I have in my keeping."

"It is false," muttered the ex-secretary, looking at the woman with baleful eyes.

Taking no notice of him, Mrs. Amry continued: "He thought he had killed me, but he only inflicted a flesh wound. I lay on the walk stunned and senseless a little while, and then recovered sufficiently to go away, just as he returned to dispose of my body. I had a little money in my pocket which the housekeeper had given me, and with that I made my way to a place where I have spent much time during the past few years. There I found money and friends. One of them has returned with me to confirm what I am about to say."

Every eye turned upon the professional-looking gentleman, who seemed slightly uneasy under the battery directed upon him, but who now looked up with a frank and honest face that proved him to be a reliable witness.

"I never saw that man before in my life," said Therwell, beginning to recover his self-possession. "This is a foul conspiracy against me—"

"Peace!" said Sir Allyn, raising his hand. "We will listen to what Mrs. Amry has to say."

Therwell scowled darkly and leaned back in his chair. As yet he had not relinquished all hope of attaining his objects, and no thought of flight had occurred to him.

"What I am about to say will put an impassable barrier between Miss Dare and that man," and Mrs. Amry pointed to the ex-secretary. "He attempted to murder me the other night, but a darker deed than that lies heavy on his soul. Look at him and see if his face does not confirm my words."

Therwell's countenance had become paler, but he now endeavoured to summon back his hardihood, and to smile sneeringly into the face of his accuser.

"Proceed, madam," he said, mockingly. "This grows interesting."

"Years ago," said Mrs. Amry, in a slow, sad voice, and with bitter memories crowding in her mind, "I was the mother of a daughter as fair as she was good, as intelligent as she was gentle. I was a widow in affluent circumstances, and my daughter was the belle of her native village. Everyone loved her, and no one envied her. She had suitors in plenty, such as they were, but she said no to one and all, and declared that she would never leave me. At last Vincent Therwell came to our village. He was younger then, slenderer, and better looking. He had the same soft ways, and the same smooth voice that he has now. He had come to our village for country air, and he supported himself by teaching music. I engaged him to instruct my daughter, and before many weeks had passed I discovered that he and Annie were lovers. I protested against this betrayal of my trust in him, and dismissed him immediately, for I had not liked him from the first. But poor Annie loved him, and pined for him in secret and at last made a runaway marriage with him."

She paused, her voice half choked, and wiped away the tears that gathered into her grief-dulled eyes.

The entering smile faded from Therwell's lips, and a bitter, remorseful expression was seen in his eyes. The woman's words had evidently touched a chord long unused to vibration, and long-forgotten music was ringing in his soul.

"Annie was my only child," resumed Mrs. Amry, "and I could not harden my heart against her for a fault that she might live to repent of. I bade her return home, and I made her husband welcome for her sake. I did not reproach either, but was a tender mother to them both. Vincent gave up his music-lessons, and I paid into his hands Annie's share of her father's fortune. He immediately entered upon a course of life quite beyond our income. Annie's fortune was dissipated, and I foolishly yielded to his continued demands, and allowed him to control my little property. You can guess what followed. Before Annie had been married a twelvemonth we had nothing in the world save our home."

Ilde Dare drew near and pressed the hand of the widow, murmuring words of comfort.

"But the worst is to come," said Mrs. Amry, striving to speak calmly. "Vincent determined to sell our home and appropriate the money to retrieve, as he said, our fortunes. He urged me continually, but I held out against him, as poor Annie begged me to do. He began to suspect that it was by her advice that I refused him, and one night accused her of the fact. She confessed it and went down on her knees to him, begging him to spare her mother the home to which her husband had brought her a bride, as a shelter in coming age. He spared her with his foot, and then bade her come and advise me to comply with his demands. She refused. There

was a wild scene between them, for Annie was strong in her love for me, and Vincent had a demon's temper when aroused. The end—you can guess—he struck her brutally—she fell gasping, bleeding—”

The woman's voice broke down in a storm of sobs that shook her frame like a tree in the wind. Therwell attempted to force a laugh and to speak a denial, but no sound issued from his throat. It was a remembrance, perhaps, of that wronged young wife who had loved him but too well, that made his cheeks so ghastly, and his eyes so strange in their gaze. He covered his face with his hands that no one might behold his emotion.

“He fled within the hour. A week later I sold my house,” said Mrs. Amry, recovering herself sufficiently to proceed, “and with the money gained for it I departed on a search for Vincent Therwell; and for years I pursued my vain quest, never finding him. My money failed at last, all but a certain sum which I devoted to another purpose, and which I would not touch, whatever my necessities. It became my practice to stop long enough in one place to earn money now and then and to go on until this little fund became exhausted. Finally, I came here, and Miss Dara befriended me, and I found myself on the threshold of my revenge.”

“Vincent Therwell is, then, a murderer?” said Sir Allyn, shuddering, as he looked at Ilde and thought how narrowly she had escaped the fate of becoming his bride.

“Well, if I were?” asked Therwell, mockingly, a reckless glitter in his eyes. “Are you any better, Sir Allyn Dare? I deny the woman's story, and shall not relinquish my claims on your daughter's hand.”

Ilde shrank closer to her father, her sweet face expressing her horror and detestation of her enemy.

Mrs. Amry smiled grimly, put back her gray locks, and drew up her tall, gaunt figure to its utmost height.

“Vincent Therwell is a murderer at heart,” she said, solemnly. “He fled, believing that he had killed his wife. But she is not dead!”

“Not dead!” cried Therwell, leaping from his chair.

“Not dead!” reiterated Mrs. Amry, but there was no proud flush on her cheeks as she spoke the words, no softening of the hard mouth, no tender mother's love in her glittering eyes.

Therwell repeated the words, as if utterly bewildered, his countenance changing, and then he demanded:

“If she be not dead, where is she?”

Mrs. Amry could not reply, but the gentleman accompanying her now spoke for the first time:

“Your wife,” he said, in a measured voice, “Mrs. Annie Therwell, is an inmate of the Crown Lunatic asylum. She has been a patient there for nearly thirteen years. She is incurably insane!”

Therwell staggered back as if shot.

Mrs. Amry hastened to follow up the blow.

“Your wife being alive,” she said, “of course you cannot marry again without committing bigamy. Miss Dara, therefore, is freed from your persecutions!”

It is doubtful if Therwell heard the last sentence. Stunned and bewildered by Mrs. Amry's communications, overwhelmed with memories of the past, his guilt betrayed to the woman he had schemed to marry, he was utterly miserable.

His mother-in-law was enjoying a full revenge.

She smiled again in her calm, mirthless way, as she marked his abject attitude, and the heavy lines that had suddenly traced themselves on his cheeks. From the heavy droop of his figure, from every line of his face, she gathered some recompense for her years of suffering and for the ruined life and mind of her daughter, whom she still loved with a mother's never-ceasing devotion.

“I have kept my word!” she murmured to herself. “Annie is avenged!”

Truly Annie was avenged. Therwell's proud hopes of allying himself in marriage to the family of Sir Allyn Dare were vanquished. His dreams of “taming” Ilde to love him were all in vain. His ambition to become the master of Edencourt and its princely revenues was frustrated. His desires to flaunt his happiness in the face of the young Lord Tressilian had met with their rightful disappointment.

But, though vanquished, he was not yet conquered.

He lifted his head at last, a bright spot burning on each cheek, a fierce light shining in his eyes, and said, in a hoarse, harsh voice, in strange contrast with his late blandness:

“Well, it seems that, as I have a wife already, I cannot marry Miss Dara. So be it. But neither can I be tried for murder,” and he laughed strangely. “I have fallen, Sir Allyn Dare, and nothing remains but to drag you down to my level. Your daughter shall

never be the wife of Viscount Tressilian, if she be not mine. His lordship is too proud to marry the daughter of a man who will perish on the scaffold. I go now, Sir Allyn Dare, to denounce you for the murder of your late father!”

And with those words ringing throughout the apartment, and before a hand could be raised to detain him, he quitted the room.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

And, though he posted o'er so fast,
His fear was greater than his haste;
His fear, though fleetier than the wind,
Believes 'tis always left behind. Butler.

It was the twilight of the day on which occurred the events detailed in the preceding chapter. In the West lingered a few faint flushes of the faded sunset. A soft hush peculiar to nature's holiest and tenderest hour hung over hill and valley—a hush broken only by the music of bird and insect life. It was especially a time for lovers' communion, a time when, all cares laid aside, two souls might draw together and worship at one shrine.

In the deep window of the drawing-room at Monrepos, where the soft shadows began to caress them, were seated Sir Hugh Chellis and his young bride. Miss Dorothy had wisely withdrawn and left them to themselves. The fair yet handsome face of the bridegroom had a strength and manliness that were new to it, and his eyes beamed with proud adoration as they rested fondly upon the head that drooped upon his breast. And Adah—words could not describe the blissful fulness of content that reigned in her heart. Her joy was so intense as almost to be painful. The gallant cavalier she had imagined was incarnated in the young Welsh baronet, who had served her so well, treated her so delicately, searched for her so devotedly, rescued her so bravely, and, above all, loved her so purely, so truly, and with such passionate fervour.

She had patiently borne a heavy cross for years, and now she was rewarded with a glorious and enduring crown of love that would grow brighter and brighter with the lapse of time.

But they were not the only lovers whom the early evening shadows caressed. In a little green lane, beyond the grove, the faithful Nelly Thomas had been practising her newly acquired coquetties upon the devoted Watkins, and had at last yielded, with much apparent reluctance, to his proposal of a speedy marriage. She could no longer plead her mistress's unhappiness or loneliness, for Lady Chellis's husband had been acknowledged and had taken his rightful position as master of Monrepos. Moreover, Lady Chellis had that morning won her secret from her and had advised her to marry, promising her a handsome dowry. So it was now all arranged, and Watkins had her permission to publish the banns in West Hoxton Church on the ensuing Sunday.

The overjoyed suitor had gone back to the house, too faithful to neglect his duties any longer, even for Nelly, and the girl had lingered behind him to muse upon her prospects, and to think of the great change a few weeks had wrought in her mistress's destiny as well as in her own. Leaning upon a small gate, that led from the lane into the road, she thought, dreamed, and planned, acknowledging to herself what she had refused to own to her lover—that she was happy.

She was a bright-faced, pleasant-looking girl, and seemed almost pretty now with her hair blown away from her face, with her cheeks flushed, her mouth smiling, and her eyes full of a dreamy light. Her dress was a pink print and became her well, and about her shoulders was gathered a Scotch shawl which she wore as she had seen her mistress wear costly Indian fabrics.

Farmers passing by in their wagons turned to look a second time at the solitary figure at the lane gate, but Nelly was quite unaware of the attention she attracted, and continued at her post, musing and abstracted.

At length a pedestrian came toiling along the road from the direction of West Hoxton. He was walking slowly and seemed fatigued, and had come nearly abreast of the gate when he observed the girl leaning upon it. He started, looked at her intently, muttered something to himself, and then paused and leaned on his staff, continuing to regard her.

He was not an old man, but his form was slightly bent and his face worn and wrinkled. He had not a pleasant countenance, yet not one absolutely evil. That he had led a dissolute life was plainly evidenced by his bloated cheeks, the redness of his nose, and the thousand and one signs in his face and bearing which are better understood than described. He was evidently one of those unfortunates who are “led away,” as the phrase goes, and not a leader in wrong-doing. Weak-willed and weak-principled, yet not wholly bad, his face declared him to be, and declared truly.

Nelly was not long unconscious of his scrutiny. Chancing to lift her eyes, she encountered his glances, and would have turned away, in her sudden alarm, but that he detained her by a pleading gesture.

“Don't go, miss,” he said, deprecatingly. “You look like one I used to think the world of, but she's dead now, poor thing. Do you live at your house?” and he nodded in the direction of Monrepos.

Something in the man's tones stirred a familiar chord in the girl's heart, and she looked at him more closely. Despite his decayed appearance, she fancied she recognized something familiar to her in his features, and she trembled with an indefinable dread.

“Yes, I live at Monrepos,” she answered. “I am, Lady Chellis's maid. Lady Chellis was Miss Wilmer!”

“Then you must be Nelly Shawcross!” exclaimed the man, tremulously.

“No, I am Nelly Thomas,” replied the girl, somewhat coldly. “My father deserted my mother, and I do not care to bear his name.”

The man's features worked convulsively and his voice was half choked as he cried:

“Oh, Nelly, Nelly, I am your father. Don't think so hardly of me. I deserve it, I know, but I always loved you and your mother. I did indeed, Nelly. Don't be too hard on me!”

He came forward as he spoke, and Nelly retreated a step behind the gate. She recognized him now, changed as he was, and the recognition gave her no pleasure. The man who had deserted her mother, who had abandoned his child to the charity of the world, and whose life had been a continued round of dissipation, might indeed be her father, but she had no filial love or respect to give him, and her manner told him so.

“You recognize me, Nelly?” he asked, eagerly.

“Yes,” she replied, reluctantly. “I remember you perfectly.”

“And you are glad to see me?”

The girl was silent.

Her father's countenance fell and a fit of trembling took possession of him that half frightened his daughter.

“Why have you come back, father?” she asked, sternly. “My mother is dead, and you know it. I am earning my own living, as I have done for years. You have not come back to benefit me, I am sure. Have you come to disgrace me and make me miserable?”

“I deserve it all,” said the miserable returned wanderer, with tearful eyes. “I am a disgrace to you and to myself—”

“What do you want here?” interrupted the girl, impatiently.

“I want shelter and food!” he replied, half savagely. “I am hungry and homeless, I haven't a penny in the world. Nobody wants me anywhere. I have been hunted out of London, and I had nowhere else to go except to you. So I've come!”

“Hunted out of London?”

“Yes,” said Shawcross, doggedly. “Two or three weeks ago I got into a little scrape with two of our companions, and we've been in hiding since. 'Twas a great affair—only a street robbery—but there's been a terrible fuss about it during the last week. Detectives have been set after me, advertisements put into the papers, placards posted up, and immense rewards offered. Night afore last I heard two of the fellows talking and plannin' to give me up to the p'lice, so I slipped out and started off afoot for this place.”

“And you are a robber—a street-robber?” ejaculated Nelly, in tones of horror. “Oh, father, I am glad mother never lived to see this day.”

The man's lips trembled, and he dug the toe of his boot into the earth as an outlet for his emotion. The sight of his daughter, in her neat attire and with her bright, fresh face, brought vividly to his mind the remembrance of his wife who had died after he had deserted her. His heart melted into unwonted softness, and even to himself he seemed wicked and utterly vile.

“I fell into bad company, Nelly,” he said, excusingly. “I never could say no when anybody wanted me to do anything. But you won't give me up, will you?” he added, anxiously, his fears returning to him. “It's penal servitude, you know.”

“No, father, I won't give you up. But you must go away—”

“I can't. I've nowhere to go. I've no money, and I'm tired and hungry. Won't your mistress let me stay in your large house? Stay, no, she mustn't know I am there. Put me in your room, Nelly, that's a dear, good girl. I won't harm anyone, and I'll go away when the search for me is over.”

The proposition was utterly abhorrent to Nelly, but her father pleaded so strongly, and urged his danger with such evident fear, that she at last began to waver in her resolution to deny him.

“It is nearly dark now,” he said, “and I could

slip into the house without being seen. Save me, Nelly—"

"I will save you, father," interrupted the girl, "if you will make this night the turning-point of your career. If you escape your pursuers will you lead a new and better life? Will you forsake your bad associates and become an honest man?"

"I will—I will!"

"Then I will do my best to save you. I wish I could speak with my mistress about you, but I haven't an opportunity now, for Sir Hugh is with her. I hardly dare take you into the house unknown to her," and Nelly looked troubled, her father's avowed crime recurring to her mind. "Why don't you go to Sir Allyn Dare, father?"

The man raised his head quickly and suspiciously.

"What do you know about Sir Allyn Dare?" he asked.

"You nursed the late Sir Allyn in his last illness!"

The face of Shawcross became the colour of parchment.

"I know—I remember!" he said, huskily. "There is a gold mine for me at Edencourt, if I choose to work it. I can make you rich, Nelly, and I will, if you'll befriend me now!"

"Sir Allyn is very anxious to see you," declared Nelly, not heeding her father's promise and assertion. "Miss Dare came here herself one day last week to try and find out your whereabouts. She is very anxious to find you, and Lord Tressilian has gone to London to look for you!"

"It is all found out then?" cried Shawcross, looking around him like a hunted deer for some hiding-place.

"What is found out, father?"

"The—the conspiracy! Therwell or Hoadley has confessed. I can see it all. Everything is down on me at once. And I'm betrayed! Oh, Nelly, I shall be hanged, and I never meant to do it. Hide me somewhere—quick!"

He came up to her and caught her hand, clinging to it as a drowning man clings to a rope. His ghastly face, his starting eyes, and his hurried breathing, all proclaimed his abject and extreme terror.

Nelly shrank back affrighted.

"They will hang me for murder!" almost shrieked Shawcross, in his anguish. "I am innocent, Nelly. Save me, save me!"

The girl felt a feeling of pity for him even amidst her alarm and horror. After all, he was her father and he had been kind to her in her childhood. Her mother had loved him. For her mother's sake she would shelter and defend him. He could not have been guilty of the incredible crime of which he accused himself. She would take him to her room and give him food, and then go to her mistress with the whole story and solicit her advice.

Thus resolving, Nelly opened the gate and bade him enter the lane. He obeyed hurriedly, as if the officers of justice were at his heels.

"Follow me now, as quietly as possible," said the girl.

Shawcross muttered that he would be as silent as he could.

Nelly then turned into the pretty grove, now dark and gloomy, and her father followed at her heels. She would not again permit him to touch her hand, for his fingers felt cold and clammy to her touch, as if there were blood upon them, but he took hold of the fringe of her shawl for guidance, and kept muttering his gratitude for her unlooked-for kindness.

They traversed the grove and came out upon the lawn, upon which the night shadows lay heavily. The house was now brilliantly lighted, and sounds of music floated out to the two as they stood there—the one so crime-laden, the other so anxious and troubled.

Nelly could see that several of the servants were in the wide front hall, listening to the unwonted music of their young mistress's voice, and prominent among the listeners were Watkins and Baker.

"We must go round," she whispered, leading the way.

Shawcross followed submissively.

The servants' hall, they discovered, was well tenanted, sounds of mirth issuing from the windows, and Nelly went boldly up to the back entrance, glided along the darkened passage, without meeting anyone, and conducted her father up to her own room.

It was a pleasant little chamber upon the first floor, and in the rear of the suite appropriated by Lady Chellis. The young bride had had this room fitted up for her maid that she might always be near at hand, and had taken great pleasure in beautifying it, as in a small part, a reward for her foster-sister's devotion. The furniture was all extremely

plain and simple, but good and well shaped; the carpet was of bright Brussels; and there were excellent engravings, a pretty work-table, a few vases, and an easy-chair.

These adornments were all revealed when Nelly had lighted her globe-lamp on the centre table.

Shawcross looked about him in surprise and delight, and said, as he took possession of the easy-chair:

"It's years since I've seen such a room as this. You ought to be happy here, Nelly. Your mistress must think a great deal of you."

"She does, but not nearly so much as I think of her," declared the maid, her face lighting up with affection for Lady Chellis. "I love her better than my own life, and she loves me far more than I deserve."

"If I had something to eat now," suggested Shawcross.

"I will see if I can gain access to the store-room," said Nelly. "Do not stir from the room while I am gone. I will be back directly."

She withdrew, hastening upon her unpleasant errand.

When she had gone her father arose and bathed his face and hands at the wash-stand and brushed out his shaggy locks with Nelly's neat brushes, and tied anew the worn, black neckerchief encircling his throat.

These improvements had hardly been effected when his daughter returned with something hidden under her apron. The something proved to be a dish containing the remains of a pasty and a bottle half filled with French wine. She placed these upon the table and bade him eat.

He caught up the bottle eagerly, and did not pause until he had drained it. He then applied himself to the task of devouring the food, and soon succeeded in clearing the dish of its contents.

"I feel as if I had gained new strength," he said, pushing the table from him. "You are going to let me sleep here, ain't you, Nelly?"

And he glanced at the pretty white bed.

"I must see what my lady says," was the response.

"When she comes up I will tell her—"

"You will betray me?" cried Shawcross, in terror.

"Hush, don't speak so loud," said Nelly, warningly. "I must tell my mistress. Did you think I would keep you here without her knowledge?"

"But she will send me away," said the man, whiningly. "She won't have me here. Don't tell her, Nelly. You can sleep with one of the maids, and no one need suspect my presence."

"My lady must know it," declared Nelly, firmly. "She will do what is just and right. There's no use in talking, father, I shall tell her."

Shawcross had recourse to tears and promises, but his daughter, feeling an instinctive distrust of him, and being warned by his revelations, refused to yield to his prayers. She assured him that in the event of his being sent away she would give him money to defray his travelling expenses and to support himself, and then withdrew, to attend to her usual evening duties in Lady Chellis's apartments.

On being left alone the unhappy man gave way to despair.

He wept, believing that he would be given up to justice, and called Nelly an unnatural daughter who wished to betray him, and bemoaned his hard lot, without a thought that he richly deserved it.

An hour passed, his tears were dried, and he began to look for Nelly's return, forgetting the earliness of the hour. He arose, opened the door slightly and listened for footsteps or the sound of voices.

For some time he listened in vain.

At length his unnaturally quick hearing distinguished the sound of horses' hoofs on the carriage path, and, in an agony of apprehension, he crept out into the deserted hall, and continued listening. There was the sound of opening and closing the front door, and then, as he stood nearly at the head of the grand staircase, the tones of a rich, eager young voice floated up to him.

It was the voice of Lord Tressilian.

"Is there a man named Shawcross here?" the viscount was saying. "I have tracked him almost to this place from London. His daughter is Lady Chellis's maid. He must be here!"

"Tracked—tracked!" muttered the miserably fugitive, clutched at the railing of the balusters.

He heard, as in a dream, the sound of the drawing-room door as it opened; he heard Sir Hugh Chellis's voice greeting warmly his noble visitor, and then he heard again the speech with which Lord Tressilian had first startled him.

"I know nothing of such a person," he heard Sir Hugh reply. "But we will summon Nelly. Come in, my lord."

"Summon Nelly!" whispered Shawcross. "She

said she should tell. What shall I do? Where shall I go?"

He looked about him, like a wild beast, with a strange glare in his eyes and a desperate look on his features.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

ARTIFICIAL SUGAR.—Chemically, grape sugar may be produced by the action of sulphuric acid upon starch. This process of conversion is now being practically carried out, and beer has been brewed from the saccharine solution prepared with the product. The Worcester Engine Company are making an apparatus for the purpose, consisting in part of a lead-lined cast-iron receiver, to bear the considerable pressure required in working.

GERMAN MOURNING CANDLES.—These are made by heating paraffine with the shells of the Anacardium nut, which contains a black resin soluble in paraffine. While the paraffine is liquid it is of a dark brown colour, but on solidifying it becomes jet black. The candles have a very thin wick and burn without giving off any unpleasant odour or vapour. Who will invent some combination of chemical substances to incorporate into stearine or wax candles which will give a variety of colours when burning, say red, green, or yellow? The demand for such an article would be very great for illuminating purposes.

SCREECHING OF STEAM WHISTLES.—A steam whistle can be varied in tone by raising or lowering the bell on the standard supporting it, the same being provided with a thread and jam nut for that purpose, but different notes, or discords, are often made by whistles without changing the position of the bells; in other words they screech. This is caused by the vibrations occurring in unequal times so that the waves interfere with one another. The inequality in the vibration is occasioned by suddenly opening the valve so as to start the edges of the bell before the mass has time to respond, by water upon it, and by disproportion in the bell itself.

CHEAP ROOFING AND WATERPROOF CEMENT.—Slate rock is ground to a fine powder, and mixed with mastic or any bituminous substance to the consistency of a thick paint, in which state it is applied to canvas, cloth, paper, felt, or any similar substance, for roofing and other purposes. This is doubtless the "elastic slate" of which we have heard from America. It soon hardens, and by the action of the elements, or by means of chemical action within itself, becomes, it is said, almost as impervious to the action of fire or water as slate itself, though considerably less brittle. It has been applied as cement for cisterns, tanks, cellar-floors, leaky hydrants, pipes, and pumps. Inkstands have been made of it while in a plastic state, which have become as hard as stone. It has also been applied as a cheap paint to out-buildings and fences.

EXPERIMENTS ON STEEL.—A glance at the tabulated results recently published of the important series of experiments made by Mr. Fairbairn to ascertain the powers of resistance of steel will show which makes possess the highest structural value, and it will also be seen that these makes show the greatest uniformity of any in quality. The value of "U" in Table II. tells the whole story of the behaviour of the steel in tension, and it will be seen that Messrs. Cammell and Co.'s steel, made, we take it, by the Bessemer process (for they also make crucible steel), did the best of all, while the specimens showed also the most regular gradation of quality. Mr. Fairbairn, in expressing certain doubts as to the uniformity of the steel available for construction, hardly appears to be aware that the quality of Bessemer steel, as respects hardness, on the one hand, or ductility and great dynamic value on the other, is under nearly perfect control, although he himself admits this in the earlier portion of his paper. In all first-class Bessemer works every "blow" is tested, and the steel classified exactly for rails, for forgings, and for plates, according to its percentage of carbon, which may be always regulated to less than one-tenth of 1 per cent. The introduction of steel, in place of iron, in works of construction now depends chiefly upon the steel-makers themselves. But for the absurdly false report, first made by a contemporary, that Joret's Bessemer steel bridge on the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, had sunk at the crown, a report at once contradicted on the highest authority, and now known by every visitor to Paris to be untrue, steel would have already taken a more prominent place in respect of such applications. Its general adoption cannot, however, be much longer delayed. If engineers will employ it, they can have it of any desired quality and of the uniformity of any iron now used.



[FENTON URGES HIS SUIT.]

SWEET ROSES YANGLED.

CHAPTER LII.

A DARK brown carriage, with silver-mounted harness on the blood horses, drew up in front of the steps, and a groom led his master's steed behind it. Mr. Hastings never drove with his wife; he could not bear the confinement of a close carriage, and, like most country gentlemen, preferred equestrian exercise.

Mrs. Hastings came forth, elaborately dressed and rouged.

She had not seen her husband since she was borne from his sight on the previous evening, for he never ventured near her while she was in what her maid called "tantrums," being the most expressive name that could possibly have been invented for the condition of Mrs. Hastings at such interesting times.

She smiled on her liege lord this morning, and held out her finger as she languidly said:

"I have overslept myself; but no wonder, after all I suffered last night. But I forgive your naughtiness, my love, in the hope that such a thing will not occur again. When you see how unhappy it makes me to see you ruining your health and destroying the fine looks in which I take such pride, you should resolve to abandon your self-indulgent habits."

"If you would cease preaching, Laura, perhaps I might make the effort. If you had any discernment you would have found that out long ago. I don't choose to be hectoring over by my own wife, so I let her see that I will have my own way even if it be to my own detriment."

"Hectoring over! what a horrid, vulgar word!" exclaimed the lady, shuddering affectively.

"By no means vulgar, for it has a classic origin, and comes from the feasts of that hero of the Trojans so nobly sung by the oldest poet known to Greece. I am sorry that the word shocked your sensitive nerves."

"If you cared about shocking my nerves, you would act differently from what you do. You never seem the least sorry or repentant, although you have been the cause of such suffering to me. I shall die yet in one of these attacks; and, if justice were done, you would be held responsible for my fate."

"Yet, if such a catastrophe were to occur, I should go 'unwip of justice,' for there is no law to punish a man because his wife gives way to her temper till it masters her completely."

"Temper! temper, is it? when my frame is racked

by suffering, and my heart almost broken by your cruel want of consideration for me. Mr. Hastings, there are moments in which I wish that I had never seen you."

"I sincerely wish that you never had, Mrs. Hastings, for we both should have been better apart. I have lived in a whirlwind since I have been your husband; and it seems that even now, when we have a grown-up daughter to witness our quarrels, you will not suffer peace to reign in her home. I have resolved on one thing, and that is, I will no longer submit to your caprices; and if you do not treat me with more respect, I will shake the dust of this place off my feet and go—heaven knows whither, but to some place as far distant from you as can be found in this miserable world."

She looked into his stern face, and saw that he was deeply in earnest. Her heart gave a great bound, for she loved him in spite of the tyranny to which she habitually subjected him, and in a changed tone she said:

"I speak only for your good, William. Don't look at me so, for you know that I am devoted to you—that I could not live without you. Don't talk in that dreadful way, or I shall be ill again."

"Very well, Laura. I will not if you will be on your good behaviour. You make me so unhappy at times that I am ready to do anything desperate. You don't understand me, or you would take a different course to influence me."

She came to his side, laid her hand upon his arm, and, looking up into his face with eyes filled with tears, almost humbly said:

"Forgive me this once, William, and I will try to do better. But indeed you exhaust my patience and humiliate me by—by—well, you know what, so I will not mention it."

He looked down at her, sighed wearily, and sadly replied:

"Let 'the dead past bury its dead,' Laura. I promise not to exceed bounds to-day, and I will make an effort to refrain from drinking more than is good for me. Of late I know that I have exceeded those bounds, but I have been very unhappy, and that was the only escape from the burden that oppresses me. Let there be a truce between us, for here comes Opal; and the poor child will be most happy to see that we are reconciled."

The young girl was indeed rejoiced to see them standing amicably together, and she smiled brightly as she sprang into the carriage after her mother. Mr. Hastings mounted his horse and slowly followed them, thinking and planning for the future, almost repenting the arrangement he had made to bring

Rosa Gordon beneath his roof, yet repudiating the suspicion that she could become the agent of evil to any member of his household.

On this bright morning he thought far more of her than of the recent reconciliation with his wife, and his final conclusion was that it was best for her to come. He must provide for her in some way, and the one he had chosen seemed to be the only means of doing so that was open to him.

When Mr. Hastings reached Magnolia he found the little party gathered in the spacious drawing-room, the elder ladies near the bright wood-fire that sparkled on the hearth, and the young people gathered in a group around a portfolio of engravings, which they were looking over and discussing.

As this was Saturday Dora and Jenny were at home; and most happy were they to be near the brother of whom they were so proud and fond. They caressed his hands, played with his amber curls, and showed in every way the delight his presence afforded them. Opal noted with an observant eye the affectionate playfulness with which Mr. Fenton submitted to these demonstrations; and, with a half-sigh, she admitted to herself that the lover chosen for her by her parents was amiable and considerate of others, and she thought that it might not be impossible to learn to love him.

She resolutely put aside the dream that had begun to mingle with her maiden fancies, and hoped that Guy was not so much attached to her as his manner of late had led her to believe. Her destiny was fixed—no effort of her own could change it, so she must submit to be given in marriage to the handsome and fascinating man who, on this day, set himself seriously to the task of winning her from the rival he both hated and feared.

Mr. Guy Denham should never take her from him—he was determined upon that; and, after Fenton's return home on the previous night, he had distinctly pledged his word to his mother that he would do all in his power to hasten his union with Opal Hastings. If they were to be united at all, it was safer and better to have their marriage completed as soon as possible and thus baffle the efforts Rosa Gordon would doubtless make to produce a rupture between them.

Mr. Fenton observed that the manner of Opal was much more shy and reserved than on the previous day, and he readily surmised that her father had given her to understand that he intended to maintain his claim on her hand.

How much she had been told concerning Inez he did not know, but to-day he was ready to protest to her that, through all his other love experiences, she

had never for one moment lost the hold upon his heart gained by her childish attractions.

Mr. Fenton would not pause to think how false he was to both these women; he felt that the necessity of a speedy decision, and rapid action, left him no choice.

Convinced that Inez was out of the question as his future wife, he was resolute that so fair a prize as Opal should not escape him through any lack of ardour on his part.

Already was his inconstant heart inflamed by her beauty, and he was ready to vow that no other girl had ever awakened such profound emotions of regard in his susceptible heart.

Mrs. Markland looked on with joyful satisfaction, and determined before the day was over to speak with Mr. Hastings on the subject of an immediate union between the young people. It could do no good to defer their marriage a year, and she was most anxious to place between her son and Inez Lopes a barrier that could not be overleaped in a moment of desperate and rebellious passion; for, after what had passed between them on the night of his return, she could not feel entirely sure of him till the knot was actually tied that bound him securely to the bride she had chosen for him.

After greeting Mrs. Markland, Mr. Hastings drew near the young people, and, pinching Dora's cheek, said:

"You are growing almost as tall and pretty as Opal, my dear. But, before you dream of a lover for yourself, you shall act as bridesmaid for her, and we will have the grandest wedding that was ever given in the county."

Opal flushed painfully, and Jenny archly said:

"I know who the bridegroom is to be, and of course Dora will be the first bridesmaid. I intend to wear a white tulle looped up with roses. Mamma will think that simple enough for a child like me, I hope."

"I don't doubt it; and, as you are such a connoisseur in dress, Jenny, perhaps you will give Opal a hint of what hers should be on that auspicious occasion?"

"Of course I will," replied the voluble child, with extreme gravity. "As Opal is a great heiress she must have satin and real lace—lace as fine and costly as that worn by the Princess Royal when she was married. She must have diamonds on her neck and arms, but her head must be crowned with orange-blossoms, because all brides wear them."

Opal was bending over a picture called "The Lovers' Parting," but she did not see it. She was trembling with agitation, and rapidly changed colour, for she knew that Mr. Fenton's eyes were fixed on her, and she felt almost angry with her father for subjecting her to so painful an ordeal by his idle prattle with this self-sufficient little girl.

Dora added to her confusion by saying, in a distinct whisper:

"That picture represents you and Godfrey, when he goes to London to get his wedding outfit—only the girl's hair is black, and yours is brown. It's a pity the artist did not give her light hair."

Fenton overheard her, and he glanced down at the coloured lithograph on which Opal's eyes were mechanically fixed. He started with a painful sense of guilt, for the scene it represented brought vividly to his mind that last parting scene with Inez, in which he had vowed before heaven to be true to her.

There was an expression in the dark, imploring eyes, in the drooping grace of the figure, that brought her image as a living reality before him; and for a moment he felt almost stunned.

In that instant he knew that Inez had lost no portion of her power over his heart, and he could have cursed himself for the base desertion he had so readily determined upon.

The voice of his mother aroused him from his painful trance, and he came back to the present, resolutely thrusting aside such unpleasant memories as intruded upon him.

Dinner was announced, and on this day he had Opal all to himself. He sat beside her, and sedulously devoted himself to her, talking with a brilliancy that was born of the unrest that devoured his soul.

What he meant to do should be done quickly, that no loophole of escape or repentance might remain. He would place his matrimonial destiny beyond his own control, and then he would be able to exorcise the past and think only of the auspicious future opening before him. He drank several glasses of champagne, and under their exhilarating influence felt nerved for the ordeal through which he intended to pass before the day was over.

Opal was unusually silent, and she scarcely tasted the tempting viands that were offered in succession to her.

When the elaborate dinner was at last over she was glad to escape from the scent of food by taking refuge in the open air.

The afternoon was mild and clear, and she managed to evade the children, hoping to gain a few moments alone in the seclusion of a summer-house situated in a shrubbery in the lower end of the large garden.

With a weary sigh she threw herself on the rustic seat it contained and pitifully murmured:

"I see it—I feel it—I must—I must obey the wishes of my father; yet—yet, I feel tempted to follow the dictates of my own heart. Godfrey intends to marry me—I understand that plainly enough, and I—I wonder if I can love him as he deserves to be loved? He fascinates me—he enraptures me in some mysterious way; yet I am sure it is not love. No—no—it is my duty to cultivate that feeling for him. I must teach myself the lesson they have set me, and—oh, heavens! here he comes to demand the ratification of the contract that was made for us, and there is no escape for me."

She recognized the eager step that drew near her place of seclusion, and bitterly regretted that she had afforded Mr. Fenton an opportunity of speaking with her in private. She intuitively knew what he came to say and dreaded hearing it.

He came blithely forward, sat down beside her, and, taking her passive hand in his own, tenderly said:

"This is a happiness I had scarcely dared to hope for, Opal—my Opal, is it not so? All day have I been longing for the opportunity to tell you with what passionate sentiments of affection you have inspired me. Our parents long ago decided that we should marry, Opal; but their wishes would have had little weight with me if I did not adore you. Your consent to give me your hand will render me the happiest and proudest of men."

She looked at him and suddenly asked:

"To how many others have you uttered the same protestations, Mr. Fenton? I have been told that you found charm, superior in your estimation to mine, while you were far away; then how can I believe that your professions are sincere?"

Nothing daunted, he earnestly said:

"Look into my eyes, Opal, and you will see that I mean every word I utter. Do not doubt me, dearest, because slandering tongues have tried to poison your mind against me, by misrepresenting a mere flirtation that meant nothing. Everything is over between the lady you refer to and myself, and I am now at your feet to be made the happiest or the most miserable of men."

He arose and gracefully dropped on one knee before her, but he did this that he might have a fair look into the agitated face which she had turned so persistently away from him that he could see nothing of its expression as he sat beside her.

Mr. Fenton saw that her doubts were melting before his asseverations, for she looked down upon him with dewy eyes, and her lips relaxed into a faint smile as she asked:

"Are you sure, Godfrey, that the gift of my love will make you as happy as you say it will? Do not seek to deceive me, nor play the traitor to your own heart, for it is of the greatest importance to both of us that we should fully understand what we desire."

"I have but one wish, Opal, and that is to make you my wife at as early a date as possible. The sooner our marriage can take place the better it will be for me, and I hope for you, my dearest girl."

In a tone of alarm she cried:

"But there is no necessity for an immediate marriage, Godfrey. Such is not my father's wish, nor my own. When he spoke to me on this subject this morning he said that we would have a year in which to understand our feelings towards each other. I am too young to marry yet."

"I do not think so, Opal. You are a woman in personal appearance, and your mind is developed beyond your years. Let mine be the precious task to develop your heart and affections, and I shall feel myself the most fortunate of men. Consent that our union shall take place immediately; there is no necessity for delay, and I am most anxious to make you all my own before your heart has had a chance to receive other impressions. To win your young affections is the sweetest hope of my life, and, blessed with them, I feel that I shall have won all that is needed to make my future happy. Let me become your husband without any delay that can be avoided."

An almost imperceptible shudder thrilled through her frame, and she hurriedly said:

"No—no—it cannot be, dear Godfrey. Eloquently as you plead, earnest as you seem to be, I must refuse to give you my hand before the stipulated year is out. Grant me that grace, I entreat, and say nothing to papa about a speedy marriage. I must not consent to it, for I do not yet fully understand my own heart. I love no other, yet I shrink from the thought of giving myself irrevocably to you."

"Opal—darling, that is but the natural feeling of every young girl when she first listens to the words of love; but you will get over it. You will gradually accustom yourself to think of me as the companion of your future life, and you will be wrought on to consent to name an early day for our union. Since it is to be, there is no good reason for deferring it longer than is necessary to prepare a *trousseau* befitting as peerless a bride as you will be. Oh, Opal! I could not bear the delay of a whole year. I know not what might happen in that interval to separate us for ever."

"But what could happen, Godfrey? I am willing to consider my hand as pledged to you; to bring my heart into subjection to the wishes of those who love me best; but it is asking too much of me when you insist that I shall become yours before I have had time to learn to love you. I would not deceive you for the world, Godfrey, and I have known too little of you during the last few years to wind my affections around you all at once. Give me the stipulated year, I entreat, in which to make up my mind to this important change in my destiny. Nothing can sever us but your will or my own, and if either of us should wish to recede from the contract, it will surely be better to retain the power of doing so before an irrevocable vow is taken at the altar."

"Opal," he passionately said, "your coolness drives me mad. I tell you that the girl who is coming hither as your governess may stop between us; she may make a breach between us that can never be healed. Consent to marry me at once, and all Rosa Gordon's arts will be effectually baffled."

She made an effort to withdraw her hands, which he had forcibly fastened in his own, and coldly said:

"Miss Gordon, I already understand, thinks that you have not treated her well. I do not wish to judge you, Godfrey, and your flirtation with her may not have been looked upon by you as wrong; but you must have a very poor opinion of me if you think anything she would dare to say against you would be listened to by me. No—if I trust you at all, I trust you implicitly. I have consented to become your wife at some future day, and I shall hold your honour sacred from the attacks of anyone. Miss Gordon will never be permitted to say to me aught that is not fitting to be spoken of to you or betrothed."

Mr. Fenton arose and leaned against the doorway, looking down upon her with an expression she could not interpret:

In a sad tone he said:

"I thank you for that assurance, Opal. It is worthy of you, and half consoles me for your opposition to what I so earnestly desire. This young girl is my bitter foe; twice has she threatened to avenge herself on me for the imaginary wrong I did her in leading her to suppose that my attentions were more than friendly. I sought her acquaintance because she reminded me of you; that was the sole attraction. I solemnly swear, though she deluded herself with the belief that I loved her. But she is the 'counterfeit presentment' beside the true gem, and you alone are mistress of my heart."

Opal looked up at him, smiled faintly, and replied:

"I am willing to believe you, Godfrey, but let me have a little time to fathom my own heart, and bring out all its capacity for loving, before I plight my faith to you. Surely that is not asking too much."

"It is only asking that which I feel incapable of granting, Opal. I shall see you every day for weeks to come, and, at the end of another month, I shall again press for a speedy union. By that time you will know me better; you will understand how dear you are to me, and I am vain enough to hope that I shall then have been able to elicit a corresponding emotion in your heart. If you love me ever so little then, will you promise to listen more favourably to my proposal of an immediate marriage? We will make a bridal trip together to the Continent, finding day by day something to prize and love in each other even more than the wonders of art and beauty to be enjoyed there."

The bait was well presented, for Fenton knew that Opal was most anxious for such a tour; that she had looked forward to it through all her short life as his crowning joy.

She was so young, so untried, so ignorant of her own needs, that she listened to this suggestion with a bounding heart. She smiled on him with all her native brightness, and, extending her fair hand to him, softly said:

"I will think of what you have said, Godfrey, and if I can gain the consent of my own heart, and papa is willing to give me up so soon, perhaps your wishes may be fulfilled. But I am to have a month to make up my mind, remember; and if I recede, then you will not urge me farther till the year is past."

"I will not; I pledge you my honour I will not," cried Mr. Fenton, beaming with rapture at this concession. "Oh, Opal, I will not doubt my power to win

you, for such love as I feel for you must meet its reward."

He did not attempt to kiss her. He had too much tact for that. He only lifted her hand to his lips with a fervent pressure, and she thanked him in her heart for his forbearance; for, after what had just passed between them, he surely had the right to kiss her if he chose to do so.

Mr. Fenton remembered the last passionate kiss he had pressed upon the lips of Inez; and although he did not scruple to secure his own interests by making love to her rival, he shrank from taking Opal in his arms, and bestowing upon her the caress which he felt would be profanation to the pure and maidenly creature who had just given him her troth.

She arose and quietly said:

"We will return to the house now. It is getting late, and mamma will be anxious to return home."

Mr. Fenton drew her arm through his, and as they walked slowly forward he said:

"There is one thing I must require of you, Opal. Guy loves you; he makes no concealment of it; and I saw indications of it yesterday that made me a little jealous. Men may flirt with impunity, dearest, but no man likes to see his betrothed too attractive to another."

He felt that she trembled, but she calmly replied: "Mr. Denham has never told me that he loves me, and I have no right to believe it until he does so. You need have no fear of him. I shall not again permit him to approach me as he did yesterday. I understand too well what is due to our relations towards each other."

"Thanks, dearest. Freed from Guy's rivalry, I am persuaded that I shall be able to win all that I have asked. Only let me devote myself to you without any disturbing element, and my ardent love must win its way to your gentle and affectionate heart."

By this time they had gained the entrance to the house, before which the carriage was waiting; and when they entered the drawing-room mischievous glances greeted them from the two girls.

Jenny came up to Opal and whispered in her ear: "Kiss me, sister, for I see from your face that Godfrey has gained your consent to become such. I hope it won't be long before I shall have my tulio dress looped with roses."

"You absurd child, that is only fitting attire for a young woman. Wait till the occasion comes, and then you shall have a white silk, with a lace tucker."

Jenny pouted, and Dora gently said:

"I hope we shall have the wedding very soon, and I think we shall, for mamma and Mr. Hastings have been talking it over; and I overheard her say that it was of no use to put it off, and that it will be safer and better to have it over at once."

Opal crimsoned, and cast a half-resentful glance towards Mrs. Markland, but another at the handsome and animated face of Mr. Fenton made her think how ungrateful she was for all the affection lavished on her.

Poor child! how was she to distinguish the true from the counterfeit, especially when love was so well simulated? And she left Magnolia with the conviction that, in the estimation of Mr. Godfrey Fenton, she was the dearest of heaven's creatures.

Mrs. Markland whispered a few words in her ear as they separated, and Opal sank back in the carriage in a strange whirl of feeling, for the assurance was thus conveyed to her that her father, on whose opposition she had relied to save her from the too ardent pursuit of her lover, had given his consent to an immediate marriage.

What influence had been brought to bear upon him which could induce him to do this? Opal vainly asked herself.

She was bewildered and frightened by the suddenness of the whole thing, and she could not divest herself of the feeling that she was hovering on the brink of a precipice from which she felt herself powerless to recede.

The hand that pushed her over its brink would be that of her own father; and, although she shivered and shrank in every fibre of her frame from the last fatal plunge, she felt that she would be forced to make it without this entire consent of her own heart.

The first moment she found herself alone with her father she threw herself sobbing upon his breast, and cried out:

"What have you done, papa? Why should you have consented that my marriage shall be thus hurried on? I shall not have time to know whether I am taking Godfrey because I love him or because he said he would take me to the Continent. I made a foolish promise when he said he would—but I regret it already. I do not wish to marry anyone yet, papa!"

"To this outburst Mr. Hastings soothingly replied:

"You will think differently about it, my love,

when you have had time to overcome your agitation and view things calmly. There is really no reason why the marriage which is eventually to take place should be postponed. Godfrey is extremely anxious that no delay shall take place, and I really could not bring forward any valid objections when Mrs. Markland set forth all the reasons in his favour. Godfrey is a noble and true man, and it is as well for you to secure a good husband now as at some future day."

"Secure him!—I don't wish to secure him. He may go if he chooses, and I should not break my heart over his loss. I do not understand how I feel towards him. When Godfrey talks with me I seem to be under a spell, and I have no power to resist his specious pleadings; but when I am away from him something cries aloud in my soul and warns me that he is not its true mate. Oh, papa, pity me and save me from—making a precipitate marriage, which may end in supreme wretchedness to your poor Opal."

"Hush! hush! darling. You must not talk in this strain. You must not give way to such chimerical fancies. Opal, you must marry Godfrey Fenton, if you would save me from disgrace. Make the sacrifice, if it be such, without these bitter wallings over your lot. Refuse to give him your hand by the twentieth of next month and all is ended for me. I will go away, and find some place in which to hide my dishonoured head for the remnant of my unhappy life. It rests with you to decide what my fate shall be."

Opal raised herself from his bosom, and regarded him with terror. His face was paler than her own, and there was an expression on it that chilled her to the soul. She tremulously asked:

"Has it come to this, that I must sacrifice myself to save you from—what?—for I do not understand the danger that menaces you."

"Nor can I explain it," he mournfully replied; "but my fate rests with you. I leave you free to decide for yourself, and—and—for me."

The solemnity with which the last words were spoken left her no room for doubt, and with a cry of anguish she exclaimed:

"Then there is no alternative! I give myself away at your command; but oh! my father, my heart is not in this contract. It is not. I feel—I know it now when it is too late."

"It will be, my darling child; for no mortal woman can resist such a man as Godfrey when he swears that he loves her beyond all others; and I believe, I am sure, that he thus regards you."

Opal shook her head, sighed heavily, and retired to her own room to weep more bitterly than she had ever wept in her life. Alone, she stood face to face with her own soul, and she knew then that another was dearer to her than the man to whom she had promised her hand.

But she was brave and meant to be true, and she silently closed that portal in her heart and vowed to make every effort to give it up to her betrothed. For her father's sake this sacrifice must be made, and she would not make it with a shrinking and unwilling heart if she could help it.

Mrs. Hastings was informed that night of what had taken place between the betrothed pair, and although she was surprised that Opal had consented to so early a marriage, she was delighted with the prospect of the bustle of preparation, and entered heart and soul into the details of the *trousseau*.

Orders were dispatched to Paris for a splendid one to be prepared, and her soul revelled in the anticipations of the exquisite toilets she ordered both for her daughter and herself.

Day after day Mr. Fenton came to Silvermere, and if the truth must be told, he prospered in his wooing. He rode, walked, and drove with Opal, and made himself so charming that she began to believe that her father's words would prove true, and her betrothed become as irresistible to her as he had been to others.

Yet at times a timid dread would steal over her, and at such moments nothing held her to her pledge except the memory of her father's strange words. For him she could do anything, and after all did he not ask her to accept as her husband the most devoted lover that maiden ever had?

Thus this inexperienced girl reasoned, and the days glided on till three out of the five weeks granted her were gone, yet she was no nearer the solution of the important question: Do I love him? than she had been in the first hour of her bondage. She walked blindly forward, reckless now of what the future might bring forth.

Through all her transitions of feeling Mr. Fenton anxiously watched her, for he was now as eager in pursuit of her as even his mother could have desired. Her coy reticence, the fluctuations of her manner towards himself, had awakened something of the feeling of the sportsman who dashes on in pursuit of the frightened hare; and Mr. Fenton persuaded his

own heart that it desired Opal Hastings above all others as the sweet partner of all its joys and sorrows.

A letter came from Inez informing him that the health of her father was rapidly failing, and nothing had yet been heard of the missing will; but it scarcely moved him now. He had turned away from the past, put it behind him for ever, and he could almost smile when he recalled the hours of anguish their recent parting had inflicted on him.

He did not reply to her; what could he have said? He had already written to her informing her that his mother was immovable in her opposition to their union, and he had nothing farther to add. He could not bring himself to tell her that he was on the eve of marriage with another while his kisses were yet scarcely cold upon her lips; so he left it to chance to reveal to the forsaken girl all the height and depth of the perfidy he was about to consummate by taking to his arms an unwilling bride.

(To be continued.)

THE CURLEW.—A favourite bird with the Muslims is the curlew, to which they attribute a knowledge of religious truth, affirming that, in its solitary flight, it pronounces incessantly one of the orthodox professions of faith: "Lak, lak, lak! Kharya Kalak fih il mulk"—"God alone is king of the world, without second or companion."—*Birds of the Levant.*

INDIAN WARFARE.—It is said the Indians have an ingenious way of setting fire to houses with their arrows. They wrap with a rag some powder on the heads of their arrows, and on the tip of the arrow head place a percussion cap. When the arrow strikes the object to be fired the cap is exploded and the powder and rag ignited. The rag burns long enough to set combustibles with which it may come in contact on fire.

CHIGNONS.—Chignons in Paris are arranged higher on the head than ever, and are usually elaborately plaited; long curls, too, fall from behind the ears on one or both sides of the head over the shoulder; and occasionally a long *natte* of hair is worn falling down the back. Sometimes the chignon falls to the ground in a lump, and is picked up and run away with by a dirty little *gamin de Paris*.

WHILST oysters are so scarce, and are fetching such high prices with us, we learn from the *Australasian* that in Otago they are not thought worth the trouble of opening. The settlers are actually burning large quantities, for the purpose of making lime of the shells. The same journal informs us that proposals for the formation of establishments for the boiling-down of cattle and sheep are being discussed; the stock-owners believing it would be more profitable to them to reduce their animals to tallow than to send them a long distance to market. As prime joints of meat are worth 6d. per lb. in Melbourne, it would appear that the butchers are making larger profits than the producers.

SINGULAR FACTS IN HUMAN LIFE.—The average length of a life is about twenty-eight years. One quarter die previous to the age of 7, one half before 17. Only 6 of every 100 reach the age of 65, and not more than 1 in 500 lives 80 years of age. The average duration of life in all civilized countries is greater now than in any anterior period. Macaulay, the distinguished historian, states that in the year 1686—not an unhealthy year—the deaths in England were as 1 in 20; but in 1850, 1 to 40. Dupin, a well-known French writer, states that the average duration of life in France, from 1776 to 1846, increased 52 days annually. The rate of mortality in 1781 was 1 in 29; but in 1850, 1 in 40. The rich live on an average 42 years; the poor only 30 years.

DESPERATE ENCOUNTER WITH BRIGANDES.—A sanguinary episode is recorded as having taken place at Rutschuk, on board the Austrian passenger steamer *Germania*. It appears that two Servian patriots, alias brigands, had concealed themselves on board this boat, and that the Turkish authorities, aware of their hiding-place, requested that they might be sent ashore, when they would be "taken care of." The captain ordered them off the boat, when they drew revolvers, and threatened to shoot him if he attempted to have them disturbed. He applied for assistance, and several gendarmes were sent on board. Meanwhile the patriots had entrenched themselves in the sleeping-cabin, and proclaimed death to all who should assail them. A fierce and bloody fight ensued, in which three gendarmes fell and one of the brigands; the other, desperately wounded, being carried off to prison, probably to enrich a pear-tree within an hour or so, if *Mithad Pasha* was at home. The boat was cleared of passengers before the lower cabin was stormed by the gendarmes; and the resistance à l'outrance offered by the bandits at bay is described as having been terrible indeed.

THE BENEFITS OF COMPETITION.—The licensed victuallers, who style themselves "the most highly taxed body of traders in the kingdom," are highly incensed at the operation of Mr. Gladstone's Retail Wine Act, passed in 1860, which permits the sale of wine in bottles by grocers. They have consequently formed a "Licensed Victuallers' Tea Association," which, "strong by its connection with gentlemen of long residence in China, and large experience as tea-tasters, can undertake to dispense with intermediate profits, and to supply tea to their customers at a lower price than the purchasing retail grocers pay." We cannot conceive a more acceptable homage to the merits of Mr. Gladstone's Act. If the grocers find it their interest to sell wine cheaper than the licensed victuallers have hitherto done, and if the licensed victuallers find it their interest to sell tea cheaper than the grocers have hitherto done, everybody—grocers, licensed victuallers, the revenue, and the consumer—will gain, and nobody will lose. We cordially wish success to the Licensed Victuallers' Tea Association.

A HEART-HISTORY.

LOVE's autocracy must form the theme of my first romance from the real; indeed, if the truth were known, there are but few heart-histories in whose compilation that troublesome little sprite has not more or less interfered. Lucy Willis, with that bright, sparkling eye of hers and her sunny smile, shall arrest the truth of my words.

The proprietor of the great Willis Farm, which covers more than a hundred acres of the richest land in the country, is a true specimen of her stalwart sons, her independent, industrious farmers; a noble race, uniting integrity, sound sense, and a high standard of moral worth, under manners the most plain and unpretending; keenly sensitive for the public weal; hospitable, kind, and thrifty; not over generous, yet far removed from that selfish avarice which would refuse a helping hand to those who would rise in the world, if they had the means to start with, or close their doors upon the weary wayfarer, vagrant though he be. Of this class is Andrew Willis.

A few words upon the domestic economy of Willis Farm. Mr. Willis is a widower, and my little heroine, Lucy, is his only child. People wondered, as people will, why such a young-looking, hale, hearty man as Andrew Willis did not take a second wife; but when asked about it he always had two answers ready—first, he was too much engaged about his farm-work to spend time courting and marrying; secondly, the old servant, who had lived with his father before him, though she was old, was a first-rate manager; and heaven forbid he should unloose her tongue by talking about bringing another Mrs. Willis into the house.

And so, year after year, Mary stood her ground, holding undisputed sway in kitchen and hall. She looked upon the athletic, six-foot Andrew Willis as a mere child, "the boy," as she termed him, when speaking to her friends; as for Lucy, she would have held her in leading-strings to this day, probably, if Mr. Willis had not sent her from home to acquire more advantages of education than the village-school afforded.

Lucy was a bright, darling little child, saying and doing a thousand witty things; and Mr. Willis made up his mind that she was a perfect prodigy, even at four years old—parents are very apt to imagine such things—so he determined, from the time she could lip her letters, that she should have the best education his means could afford; and when, in process of time, she came to know more than the school-master (in Farmer Willis's opinion), he resolved to part with his darling for a little while, that she might have the benefit of a fashionable boarding-school.

In selecting the establishment of Mrs. Lacy, situated some thirty miles from Willis Farm, he proved himself more fortunate than many who send forth their children to gather "apples of wisdom, but who return with thistles."

At the end of two years Lucy was pronounced "finished," and returned home. If her father thought her a prodigy at four years old, what must he have considered her at seventeen? for she had contrived to store away a goodly amount of knowledge in her little head, even if she were at times a little giddy.

Yes, and notwithstanding she must have been so occupied at Mrs. Lacy's with her algebra, and her history, French, and philosophy, she had somehow managed to commence a little heart-history of her own; but then she did not let anyone read it, not she.

Farmer Willis himself never knew a word about this unbargained-for accomplishment.

One day, when Lucy had been at home about a week, Mr. Willis had occasion to go to the village. "Dear father, will you please see if there be a letter at the post-office for me?" cried Lucy, running to the gate.

"Ha! ha! a letter for you! that's a new idea." Now the farmer was no great scribe. Unless to announce a marriage or a death it was a rare thing for him either to indite or receive a letter. The post-office revenue was therefore but little benefited by Andrew Willis.

He was somewhat pleased, therefore, that his Lucy should expect a letter; so, after unloading, he brought his team to a stand-still in front of the tavern, which besides offering entertainment for man and beast, served also for the post-office. Sure enough, there was a letter—a very thick one too—for "Miss Lucy Willis," directed in an elegant flowing hand—a gentleman's hand.

"Hum! what does this mean?" thought Farmer Willis, turning the letter over and over again, and looking at the seal, "*L'Amour*," "*Fidélité*."

Lucy was watching for his return. She flew swiftly along the road to meet him. Her father held up the letter.

Oh! what a happy face was hers as she caught it from his hand; and, seating herself under a shady tree by the road-side, she eagerly tore off the envelope, and pressed the insensible chirography to her lips.

"Hum! what does this mean?" again thought the farmer, eyeing Lucy keenly.

In less than a week another came.

"Hum!" said Mr. Willis, putting it in his pocket, "I must see what this means."

He went home, foddered the cattle, and then walked into the house, and said, "Come, Lu, sit down by me."

Lucy laid aside her work, and, drawing a low footstool to his side, folded her dimpled hands upon his knees, and looked up smiling into his face.

"Well, Lu, you had a nice time, didn't you, at Mrs. Lacy's?" said Mr. Willis, smoothing back the long flaxen curls from her white upturned brow.

"Indeed I did, father dear. I am sure, although I was so anxious to see you, I was sorry to come away."

"Hum! Mrs. Lacy used to keep you very strict, I suppose; never let you go out, did she?"

"Oh, yes! we walked every day—an hour in the morning, and an hour after school at night; it was so pleasant. Sometimes Mrs. Lacy would go with us, and sometimes—oh, it was so pleasant!" And Lucy heaved a sigh as she concluded.

"I take it for granted you never saw any boys there, Lu, did you?"

"Why, father, it was a school for girls, you know; it would have been very strange, I am sure, to have seen a set of rude boys in our pleasant school-room."

"That is not what I mean. Did any young men ever visit Mrs. Lacy's?"

"Mercy, no! Mrs. Lacy would not even let Edward

invite—"

"Edward! Who is Edward?"

"Mrs. Lacy's nephew, father," replied Lucy, stooping to tie her slipper, which at that very moment it seemed necessary for her to attend to.

"Hum! And I suppose Edward walked with you, didn't he?"

"Yes, father, when Mrs. Lacy could not go!"

"I thought so! Who is he? What is his name, this Edward?"

Poor Lucy, how she tried not to blush; and yet what a glow instantly suffused the tell-tale countenance she averted from the scrutinizing glance of her father.

"His name is Bartine—Edward Bartine, father—he is a very fine young man; everybody loves him."

"Hum!"

"All the girls loved him like a brother."

"And you also loved him like a brother, I suppose."

"Sir!"

"Hum! Well, what was this very fine young man doing at the young ladies' boarding-school?"

"He only came to pass a few months with his aunt, and to pursue his studies with Dr. Heber; he is going back to college very soon, I suppose."

"Going back to college! Oh, I understand, I understand—some wild scape-grace, I'll be bound, suspended for misdemeanour—never will be worth a straw—never will be good for anything, not he; wasting the money which his father toiled hard to earn, I'll warrant you!"

"No, indeed, father, Edward Bartine is not like that, indeed he is not!" eagerly interposed Lucy.

"How do you know? I tell you he is. See here, Lu, who is this from?" And, putting his hand in his ample coat-pocket, Mr. Willis drew forth the letter, holding it up, however, at arm's length.

"Oh, dear, dear father, please give it to me; please do; that's a dear father!" cried Lucy, springing up, her face radiant with joy, and extending her hand for the precious missive.

"Not so fast, little Miss Lucy Willis; sit down again; there is your letter. Now open it and read it to me," said Mr. Willis, passing his arm around her waist to prevent her flight.

"Oh, father, please let me go—indeed I cannot read it to you!" urged Lucy, the tears trembling like dewdrops on her long-fringed eyelids.

"Well then I'll read it myself; it must be very amusing. I should like to read a letter from such a nice young man," said Mr. Willis, attempting to take it.

"Father, please don't; it is only about—about—"

"Never mind, I will see what it is about. Lucy, you must either give me the letter, or read it to me. I must know the contents!" and this time her father spoke sternly.

The poor girl dared not disobey. With trembling hands she broke the seal, and, in a voice scarcely audible, read:

"My dearest, sweet Lucy—"

"Hum—puppy! Go on."

"My dearest, sweet Lucy. To-morrow—to-morrow I leave for—"

Lucy could proceed no farther, but, covered with blushes, hid her face in her father's bosom.

"Well, well, Lu, don't cry; I don't want to hear any more of such silly stuff. Light, give me the letter, it will serve nicely to light my pipe," said Mr. Willis, twisting it in his fingers.

"Father, won't you give me the letter—won't you, father?" pleaded Lucy.

"No, Lucy! Now go and get pen, ink, and paper; this must be answered."

Pale and frightened, she brought her writing-desk and placed it on the table.

"Are you ready?" said her father; "well then begin. 'Mr. Edward'—what's his name—Bartine?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are a base, designing young man."

"Must I say so, father? Indeed he is no such thing!" interrupted Lucy, looking up with tearful eyes.

"I say he is—go on. 'You are a base, designing young man; so, although I am but a farmer's daughter, never presume to address another letter to me.' Have you written that? Very well now add 'Yours respectfully, LUCY WILLIS.'"

Mr. Willis took the blotted page, read, sealed, and directed it, and put it in his pocket. Then, taking Lucy in his arms and kissing her, he said:

"My darling, I would not grieve you for the world. What I am doing is for your good, my child, though I know you think me very cruel; but you will thank me one of these days. There, go to your chamber and lie down awhile. Kiss me, dear Lu."

Lucy pressed her lips to his with a loud sob, and then, hastening to her little chamber, she bolted the door, and, throwing herself on the bed, gave way to her affliction. For the first time a tear had blotted her heart-history.

"What the mischief ails the girl, I wonder? She doesn't eat, she doesn't sleep, and half the time there are tears in her pretty eyes. Her rosy cheeks are all gone, and every now and then she sighs enough to do break one's heart. She thinks I don't see it. When I am by she tries to smile and sing as she used to. She thinks I haven't any eyes, but I have. Confound that fellow. I wish I had kept her home. Well, well, poor Lu, something must be done, or else she'll die—something must be done," again exclaimed Mr. Willis, slowly pacing to and fro in the little porch, and watching with a sad, perplexed countenance the slight figure of Lucy, strolling pensively through the garden, and at length the "something" took upon itself a shape which pleased his fancy.

Mr. Willis had one sister, who had been early left a widow with one son. He had several times offered her a home in his house, but the distance was too great; new friends and associations had been formed to supplant earlier ties, and the widow, though grateful for her brother's kindness, preferred them.

Now Mr. Willis had no son, and a vague idea had now and then seized him to unite Lucy to his sister's child. Thus the great Willis Farm would be continued in the family when he was dead and gone. True he had never seen him; but what of that? he was certain he must be a fine fellow, a good, honest lad, for all the Willis were so from the beginning.

"Yes, I will write this very night," said Mr. Willis, stopping suddenly in his walk, as this bright thought suggested itself. "I'll invite Reuben to come and see the old homestead, where his grandfather and his great-grandfather lived and died,

and then if he only takes a fancy to Lu, which of course he cannot fail of doing, I shall be as happy as a lord. He will soon drive this college scapegrace from her maid."

"Lu, how do you like your Cousin Reuben?" said Mr. Willis, knocking the ashes out of his third evening pipe.

Lucy looked up from her work and smiled faintly, as she replied:

"My dear father, you know that I have never seen him."

"True, true, neither have I; but I tell you what, Lu, I am going to write to Reuben to come and pay us a visit, and bring his mother, too, if she will; how should you like it?"

"Very much indeed. I shall be delighted to see Aunt Richards, whom you have so often talked to me about."

"And Cousin Reuben, too?"

"Yes, of course I should."

"Well, Lu, I hope you will like Reuben, for do you know I have set my heart upon having him for a son-in-law; what say you?"

Lucy at once burst into tears, and protested in the most earnest manner that she would never marry. She wished her father would not talk so. She would not marry for the world. She could never love anybody. She was very happy as she was. Oh, very happy indeed.

However, Mr. Willis wrote the letter, and it took him three hours to do so. Then, in the morning, as it was haying time, and he was busy, he told Lucy he wished she would walk over to the village and put it in the post-office.

What could have put it into Lucy's head to do as she did I am sure I don't know. I will not pretend to explain such a piece of mischief, not I. I will only state facts.

"DEAR MR. EDWARD BARTINE,—I have thought of you a great many times since I wrote those few lines to you, which you must have considered very strange. My father made me write them, for he does not know you, or I am sure he never would have done so. You will forgive him, won't you? If you would like to come here during vacation, as you said you would, I shall be very happy to see you, and I daresay my father will like you very much; I don't see how he can do otherwise. If you wish to come, please take a hint from the enclosed letter to my Cousin Reuben Richards. LUCY WILLIS."

"P.S.—If you have no use for the enclosed, please forward it to the address."

Only think of Lucy Willis writing such a letter; but she did! and then she neatly folded it, and, enclosing the one designed for Mr. Reuben Richards, with glowing cheek and palpitating heart, she directed it to Mr. Edward Bartine, and, putting on her bonnet and shawl, tripped fleetly to the office and posted it.

"Ah, she'll come round all right yet!" said Mr. Willis a few days after, as he overheard Lucy carolling one of her lively songs.

In due time a young man, with a ponderous leather trunk, alighted at Mr. Willis's gate.

It was after dinner, and the farmer was enjoying his afternoon pipe; while Lucy, sitting very quietly by his side, was reading the village news.

But all of a sudden, as she saw the young man approaching, she sprang up in the strangest confusion, and ran into the house.

Mr. Willis rose up, put down his pipe, and hastily advanced to meet the youth.

"This must be my dear nephew!" he said, extending his hand; "I know the true Willis look. I am glad to see you, my lad!"

"Thank you, uncle; how are you—how is Lucy?" asked the stranger, warmly shaking hands.

"She is well, Reuben, and will be very glad to see you. Come into the house; you must be tired after such a journey. Lucy! Lucy! Why, where has she flown to? Lucy! Oh, here she comes! Well, Lu, we have him here at last; this is your Cousin Reuben!"

Lucy turned very pale when she first cast her eyes upon her cousin, who, with red hair and a somewhat limping gait, advanced to salute her, then a rosy blush, and an arch smile but half suppressed stole over her pretty face. But she blushed still deeper, and drew back timidly from the tender embrace her young relative would fain have bestowed upon her.

"My own dear Lucy!" was softly whispered in her ear.

"So, your mother would not venture with you?" said the farmer. "Well, I'm sorry, for it is many a long year since we met; I hope she is well?"

"Not very; she is greatly troubled with the rheumatism."

"That's bad. And how are all the rest of the folks—Uncle Bill?"

"Dead!"

"Bless me, dead! You don't say poor Uncle Bill is dead?" exclaimed Mr. Willis, aghast at such news of an only brother.

"Not exactly dead—only half killed with rheumatism, I mean."

"I'll warrant old Mr. Stubbs is living!"

"Dead, a year ago."

"Dead, is he? What killed him, I should like to know, for I thought him good for a hundred years?"

"Rheumatism, uncle."

"Rheumatism again! What in the world do you live in such a place for? Well, Reuben, how do like your Cousin Lucy's looks? I think she is like your mother, who resembled the Darlings more than the Willisess."

"I think Lucy is a decided darling!" replied Cousin Reuben, with a mischievous glance at the fair object in question.

"But you look like the Willisess, all but your hair; none of the family ever had red hair!" continued the farmer, "and, excuse me, but I must say I never liked it. However, I suppose you will reconcile me to it. What makes you limp so, nephew, nothing serious, I hope?"

"Oh, no! nothing but rheumatism, Uncle Andrew!"

"Good gracious, rheumatism again! Now make yourself at home, will you? for I must go and look after my oxen. Lucy, take care of your cousin, I will soon be back."

"Don't hurry, uncle, I am quite at home!" and as Mr. Willis closed the door Cousin Reuben sprang to the side of Lucy, and, stealing his arm round her waist, imprinted a kiss upon her blushing cheek.

"I say, nephew, we must bathe your rheumatism in beef brine," said Mr. Willis, reopening the door. Then hastily closing it again, he snapped his fingers, exclaiming, "Ah, it will do! it will do! He is a fine young fellow, I see, only that confounded red hair—he got that from the Richardses."

A week and more passed. Lucy and her cousin agreed wonderfully well, and Mr. Willis was in perfect ecstasy at the recovered bloom and spirits of his daughter.

"Ah, Lu," said he, one day, slyly, "what do you think of Cousin Reuben now? Is he not worth a dozen of your college men?"

And Lucy declared she really liked Cousin Reuben as well as she had ever done Mrs. Lucy's nephew.

Cousin Reuben, who was now perfectly domesticated, made himself not only very agreeable, but useful to his uncle in various ways, and the farmer regretted more and more, every day, that he had not known him before.

Reuben was a geologist, and he explained to Mr. Willis how some portions of his farm, which he had thought most unproductive, might be made to yield good crops; he was an architect, and he drew the plan of the new house his uncle designed to erect in the spring.

He was a botanist, a geometer.

"Why how in the world did you pick up so much learning? I should think you had been to college by the way you talk," said Mr. Willis, one evening, addressing his nephew, who had just been expounding some knotty point.

"Yes, uncle, and I have just taken my degree," replied Reuben, looking at Lucy.

"You! the deuce you have! Why, where did your mother raise money to send you to college?"

"My education was provided for in my grandfather's will."

"It was, eh? I am sure I never dreamed you had been to college, though I thought from the first you knew a great deal for your years."

"Thank you, Uncle Andrew."

"And what are you going to do now?"

"My dear uncle, I shall soon receive my medical certificate; then, if you will bestow upon me dear Lucy for a wife, I will buy that pretty cottage at the foot of the hill, and commence practice."

"You buy it! No, no; I am able to buy it myself, and give it to Lucy on her wedding-day. I am sorry you don't like the farm better, for I had set my heart upon seeing you settled upon the old family estate; but no matter. Come here, Lu; will you marry your cousin? Ah, I see you will; here, take her, nephew, she is yours—heaven bless you!"

Lucy burst into tears, and for a moment her lover also appeared much agitated. He then took Mr. Willis's hand.

"Then you really like me, uncle?"

"Of course I do, lad."

"And you don't know of anyone else whom you would prefer for a son-in-law?"

"Always had my eye on you, Reuben."

"But suppose you have been imposed upon; suppose I am not your nephew at all?"

"Ho, ho, imposed upon! Pooh, don't I know the Willis look—all but the red hair—I wonder where you got that from?"

"I bought it of a French barber; it is a capital wig, don't you think so?" replied the young man, coolly taking it off, and handing it over for the inspection of Mr. Willis.

"Hey! why, what's all this? who are you? what does this mean?" exclaimed the farmer, staring at the fine-looking youth, with dark-brown locks, who was bending so tenderly over Lucy.

"Mr. Willis, why should I hesitate to confess who I am," was the answer, "since you have already assured me of your affection and your willingness to bestow on me this dear hand? My name is Edward Bartine."

"Bartine—Bartine—why, that is the same fellow—"

"Grant me your patience a moment, Mr. Willis," resumed Edward; "with your prejudice against me I was very certain you would never allow me to visit Lucy. You must believe me when I assure you that the imposition I have practised upon you has been most repugnant to me, and nothing but the hope of gaining your favour under the guise of your nephew could have tempted me to act the part I have."

"My nephew! But how did you know anything about my nephew? Lucy, did you—"

"Yes, sir."

"Say, Mr. Willis, will you forgive me? will you still confer upon me your dear Lucy? may I, as Edward Bartine, receive the priceless gift you but now bestowed upon Cousin Reuben?"

"You have deceived me, young man; although I acknowledge I was wrong to harbour such prejudice against a stranger. Would there was not so much depravity in the world as to warrant my suspicions. But I forgive the deception; you were no less a stranger to me as Edward Bartine than as Reuben Richards, and I have learned to love you. Yes, you shall have Lucy and the cottage to boot. Once more I give her to you, and again I say, heaven bless you, and make you both happy, my dear children."

In a moment Lucy raised her head from her father's shoulder, and, looking archly into his face, said:

"Dear father, here is that letter for Cousin Reuben, shall we send it?"

"Ah, you little jade, now I understand! Send it, yes, and we will have them all to the wedding—if the rheumatism will permit! Ha! ha! what a lame concern you made of them, eh?"

"Yes, my dear sir, but the plot has not proved a lame one."

Mr. Bartine and the charming Lucy reside in the beautiful villa mentioned before, which Edward insisted upon purchasing himself.

Mrs. Richards and Reuben accepted the invitation of Andrew Willis, and now reside altogether at the farm. Reuben is a great favourite with his uncle, who, however, acknowledges that Edward pleases him better for a son-in-law. It is said that Reuben will soon be married to a pretty girl in the neighbourhood, and will without doubt succeed to the Willis Farm. B. C.

THE PRIDE OF THE FAMILY.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. WALTER SATTONSTALL, standing one morning near the open door in the counting-house in which the head clerk stood alone before the books, was startled by a quick, impatient exclamation:

"This will never do. How can I be so foolish! My thoughts have run away with me, and now I must go all over the column again."

The young man's face was full of annoyance, and a little conscious-stricken shame. The senior partner smiled, and walked deliberately into the counting-house.

"How now, Tristram? You are not usually in such a fluster. I am sure it must be a pair of bright eyes which have set the figures to dancing confusion in the column."

He burst out laughing at the look of consternation with which his words were received.

"So I've hit the right nail upon the head. Well, well, young sir, settle the matter as quickly as possible, and come back to your steady business habits."

A gloomy cloud was slowly settling over Tristram's face.

"Indeed, sir, you are mistaken," he stammered; "there is nothing to arrange."

"Pooh, pooh! I read it all in your face, Tristram. There is some young lady's beautiful face thrusting itself all the time before your eyes, so that you can't

see anything else. Don't be faint-hearted. A good-looking young man, with steady habits like yours, an uncommonly well-balanced character, and a good situation—I'm going to add to your salary, year by year, you know, so long as you serve me faithfully! Nonsense! I tell you, Tristain, your case is irresistible. Away with you, and make your proposal, and come back rejoicing."

But Tristain was staring blankly from the window, seeing something more than the dingy warehouse wall on the other side of the street.

"I thank you, sir, for your kindness. But you are mistaken—entirely mistaken," he faltered.

"So you are not in love?" persisted Mr. Walter, with a roguish smile breaking over his lips.

Tristain coloured a little.

"I ought not to be," answered he, resolutely; "and I will not be."

"And why not, I pray you? Come, Tristain, trust me; you know I am your friend. I am interested, too, for I cannot spare your cool head and faithful integrity in my business. I really think it would spoil you to be the victim of an unhappy attachment, while a suitable marriage would be the very perfecting of your own happiness, and secure permanent usefulness with me. It surely is not on any pecuniary account, for many a poor fellow supports a wife and children on less than I shall give to you. I am afraid you are a little too cautious, Mr. Tristain."

"Not to be honourable," said Tristain, gravely. "I will never be presumptuous."

"Presumptuous? Nonsense! I should like to know what presumption there is in offering the most fastidious young lady in the land an honest hand like yours, my boy."

Tristain looked up suddenly into the speaker's face.

"Mr. Sattonstall, would you say that if it were your own daughter?"

A blank look of astonishment fell upon Mr. Walter's face. "Edith!" exclaimed he.

"Spare yourself any uneasiness," Tristain hastened to add. "I have never once set my eyes upon Miss Sattonstall's face. I was only putting the case personally to you. You will understand now that I am right. But do not be concerned for me, I beg of you. I have but this moment discovered my danger. I assure you I am man enough to conquer it."

Walter Sattonstall's face was glowing. He came over to the desk—to which Tristain had turned, resolutely opening the books again—and laid his hand on the young man's shoulder.

"Youngster, you have not read Walter Sattonstall thoroughly. I wish to heaven that I were certain my darling would find as true and honest a man for her husband as you. Harkee! There's a gay young lawyer who is hovering about. I can't be sure which he is after, Edie or a friend of hers. He is made much of in society. Eustace is very friendly with him. I understand he has wealthy parents; he is certainly lavish in expenditure—a gay, brilliant, talented fellow. You may have seen him; his name is Urban Worth, and he comes here with my son. Now, I watch that fellow as jealously as a hen watches a hawk hovering over her chickens. I am convinced he is insincere, vacillating, untrustworthy. I shall try to save Edith from him. But if it were you, my honourable, conscientious boy, I should put her hand into yours, and say, from the depths of my heart, 'Heaven bless you!'"

Tristain was deeply moved.

"I cannot express my appreciation of your generosity to me, sir," said he, "but I know very well that I might have fallen into a hundred other firms and not have met with such kindly dealing."

"Pooh! what is it, after all, but pure selfishness? I like you, man. I know very well you are one in ten thousand. Eustace is wild and reckless. No one sees it more readily than I do. He will always need a steady hand. I mean, heaven willing, that he shall have it, after I am gone. I didn't mean to say anything about it yet awhile, but the mood is on me to let it out now. I have been for some time looking for a steady, reliable partner. I mean, Mr. Tristain, that you shall be that partner some time or other."

"Oh, sir, you are too kind! My fortune indeed is made."

"There's another thing yet. Such being my intentions, I see that I have fallen short of my duty. You have never looked upon Miss Edith's face? Well, sir, it is high time the future partner in Sattonstall, Son & Co.'s firm had looked upon all the family. You understand there is to be a permanent arrangement made. I shall look for you at tea every night at my table. Mind that I am very particular about it. You will go with me to-night, and get your introductions; and if you dare to allow a week to go by without showing yourself at my house, I'll reduce your salary."

Mr. Walter laughed, brushed off a tear clinging to his eyelash, and walked off, before the young man could reply. And Tristain, when he went home to dinner, took care to dress himself in his best, and be in readiness. So at dusk Mr. Walter took him into the drawing-room, which suddenly flashed out into radiance, and in the most cordial, unceremonious manner introduced him to a lady, who greeted him with a friendly smile, as Mr. Tristain.

"I'm glad enough to see you, at last, my dear Mr. Tristain," said Mrs. Sattonstall, smilingly. "We've heard a great deal, I assure you, about the model young man at the counting-house. Edith, my love, this is Mr. Tristain."

Edith Sattonstall, a merry-faced, graceful girl, came forward, and placed her white hand at once into that of Tristain.

"So this is papa's paragon? Oh, Mr. Tristain, I am almost afraid of you! Why I must have seen you before. You are strangely familiar to me in appearance. Anna, come and see Mr. Tristain, and tell me how to discover the peculiar resemblance which haunts me."

A tall, slender figure came forth from the recess where the piano and musical instruments were placed. Tristain's eyes fell a little from the flash of light which sent a wicked little dazzle into his eye, as the lady advanced, and the rays from the chandelier above blazed down on the costly diamond pin and ear-rings which formed her sole ornaments. That stately poise of the queenly head, those glossy curls of raven braids—he did not need to be told who it was.

"He is like himself, and no one else, my dear Edie," said Miss Merton. "I am very glad to meet you again, Mr. Tristain. So you arrived safely home the other day?"

Mr. Walter Sattonstall had been watching this little scene. He now turned away.

I wonder if ever was humble clerk so cordially received before in his employer's drawing-room? Mr. Walter Sattonstall passed for a very eccentric man, in the circle which claimed him for his wealth, rather than for his sterling nobility of character, and this would be called one of his wildest whims by the autocrats there. His wife and daughter were ready to second his hospitable efforts, however; and in a few moments Tristain was quite at home, even in the presence of Miss Merton.

One little circumstance troubled the conscientious youth. He now perceived, for the first time, that Mr. Sattonstall really believed his surname to be Tristain. He remembered now that he had been introduced at the iron-works as Master Tristain, and readily perceived how the mistake had arisen, which he had supposed to be a whim of his employer. He was twice on the point of setting the matter right, and then, recalling Urban's earnest request to hide, for a little time, that they were brothers, he decided to say nothing.

The evening brought a gay bevy of young gentlemen, and a few ladies. Tristain was quietly retreating when Mr. Walter Sattonstall intercepted him.

"How now, Tristain?"

"I am going, sir. I have enjoyed myself very much."

"Why do you go?"

"I—should be looking over the books, sir."

"The books are mine, I believe. I won't have them touched to-night. Go back to the drawing-room; that is my positive command. There'll be music presently, and you'll enjoy it. Miss Merton plays like an angel, if she's only in the mood."

So Tristain spent the evening in the richly furnished, brilliantly lighted rooms, in the midst of the gay company. He could not but acknowledge to himself that there was something inspiring in all this, answering to an inner chord within his nature, which had hitherto been dumb and dormant. He thought of his bare, dismal garret, and inwardly loathed it; and yet he knew, for all that, he was not yet ready to desert it.

"It depends upon Urban," he commented, inwardly. "If he only improves, as I am encouraged to believe he will, I can afford to lay aside my anxiety concerning home and spend a little more upon myself."

He heard his brother's name frequently mentioned, always with respect and good-will, as one of themselves. "I wonder who the lady can be—if it be one of these?" and he glanced from one to another of the fair faces, when Urban's name was mentioned, yet without obtaining any satisfactory result. "I should like to see her. I could judge, I think, by her looks, if there be hope for him—if she be capable of accepting him, knowing his poverty." And then, before he was aware of it, he was absorbed in watching Miss Merton, who was conversing with one of the gentlemen. It was evident they were all a little shy of her. There was a slight haughtiness, or rather reserve, about her manner, a nameless dignity which kept them at a distance. The airy no-

things, the frothy beads of the gay talk going on around the other belles would not answer in her case. Her clear, acute mind required better offerings. And yet she was brilliant and witty, and when she chose could charm the simplest there.

Tristain smiled with proud exultation, remembering the perfectly easy and familiar manner she had adopted at that memorable lunch in the great house beyond the iron-works. He did not see the same deportment with any of the gentlemen here.

"I know how to appreciate her. I understand the fine tone of that noble mind, and I could minister acceptably to it. Oh, if I were only of her own station, no one could make her happier than I," he thought, with a mixture of anguish and joy.

Then his ear caught a whisper behind him, and all his faculties were strained to follow it.

"Her highness, la belle Merton, is a little pensive to-night. Is it because the *fancé* is absent?"

"What do you mean, Maude?"

"Why, young Mr. Worth, of course. Where have your eyes been all the season? Don't you see that she has a different smile for him than for all the other worshippers about her throne?"

"You don't mean that! He is too brilliant and gay to be wasted on such an iceberg. But now you mention it I remember. Yes, yes; I see. And he was thoroughly devoted to her that night at the ball. Did you see that spray of heath in his button hole? She had a bouquet of heath and pink roses. I remember it all well enough. Well, the fashionable world will be electrified. I suppose they're well matched for wealth. I've always understood he was of some rich-country family. Is it known yet, Maude?"

"No. Take care you don't spread the news till there's an acknowledgment, for my lady has high notions."

The gay speakers fluttered away, and Tristain was left sitting by the window like one stunned.

It was true. He did not doubt it. He had been a simpleton that he had not thought of it before. Urban, with his beauty, his fascinations, that rare, subtle tact of his of suiting himself to any society, had won her before him. Urban had told him as much. He said he was only moving cautiously for fear of startling the lady. Urban, Urban always! Every way, everywhere, his twin-brother crossed his path. And only a short time since he had been congratulating himself that the feud was ended.

Again the fierce, dark passions came surging over Tristain Worth. He sat there amid the lights, and the gay voices, outwardly sternly calm, but within there was a frightful tempest of emotion.

A low, ineffably tender sound broke through the merry confusion of silvery voices. Miss Merton had gone to the piano. Beneath her masterly touch the hidden enchantments woke.

A voice, beyond all earthly tones, pleaded with the inexpressibly sweet, harmonious notes.

Was it improvisation? Was it ordinary music which came from her genius-inspired fingers? Tristain could not tell. He only knew that a soft dew was in his eyes, a holy calm in his heart. The demon had fled. A calm resignation, a grand renunciation, were in his power. If it were needed, he should find strength for it.

"Only deserve her, Urban, and I will not grieve," he thought, when the good-nights were spoken, and Miss Merton's calm eyes were the last to follow him out of the drawing-room.

Urban was absent four weeks, and during that time, despite his best attempts to escape the dangerous sweetness of such hours, Tristain found himself, by Mr. Walter's order, at the latter's house three evenings out of every week.

And Miss Merton was paying a visit to Edith Sattonstall all the time. It happened occasionally that there were no other visitors. Then some choice book was brought forward, and by turns Tristain and Miss Merton read aloud. The lot had fallen to them after a general trial, when with unanimity they were declared the only acceptable readers.

At times like these Tristain's sterling superiority over the fashionable young gentlemen of the day was seen to best advantage. Whatever else he had denied himself, he had been no niggard with regard to intellectual culture, and his clear thinking, his wise sagacity, his extensive information, added no little attraction to the library table.

Eustace Sattonstall, it is true, rarely remained the whole evening.

He would plead an engagement at the club, or a ride promised a friend, and then stroll off, followed by his father's anxious eye and half-repressed sigh.

It was to finish a book commenced the previous evening that Tristain presented himself one afternoon at an unusually early hour.

He had seen the carriage pass, and judged all the family would be absent on their daily drive, and had hurried away from his desk to look over the volume before the reading-hour.

He had become a familiar and expected guest, so the servant admitted him unhesitatingly, and left him to seek whichever room he pleased; therefore Tristain passed directly to the library.

The first sight which met his eye was Miss Merton, seated in the great easy-chair, with the identical volume in her hand.

Colouring to the temples, Tristain attempted to leave noiselessly; but the lady arose, saying, with a smile:

"Nay, Mr. Tristain; don't let me drive you away. You have come to read in quiet; I'll promise not to interrupt you."

"It is of no consequence. I fancied I should like to read over again the poem in that last chapter. It has been haunting me all day," answered he, standing on the threshold.

"Precisely the same ground which drew me hither. I have read it twice already, and shall be glad to hear you repeat it the third time. It grows finer every time."

She held forth the book, with one of her rare smiles, so clear, and dazzlingly bright. Tristain, quite unconsciously, took another step across the threshold, in the opposite direction.

"Really, one would think I were some uneasy sprite possessed with an evil charm," she began, with a merry smile; and then, growing grave and earnest, she added: "You strengthen a vague impression I have had all along, Mr. Tristain, that something has changed you since that cordial, brief visit of yours at home. Yet you promised them to be such a good friend that I am loath to let you depart, unless there is good reason for you to avoid me."

"There is good reason—the very best of reasons," spoke Tristain, in the voice of one talking as if in his sleep.

She looked pained and surprised, but rose quickly. "Then I will not be the means of driving you from the library. Stay here and read in peace, I beg of you."

She laid down the volume as she spoke, and walked rather haughtily towards the inner door, and disappeared.

"What a simpleton I am," said poor Tristain; "how unbearably rude I have been."

And, pushing away the now obnoxious volume, he sat down and stared blankly at vacancy, until the sound of light steps and gay voices in the hall announced the arrival of the family from their drive.

Miss Merton was unusually gay at the tea-table. In fact, she was both piqued and offended with Tristain, and was feminine enough to determine to punish him by showing him how bewitching she could be.

"Really, Anna, your spirits have risen to such a brilliant height that I sincerely hope we shall have plenty of visitors to enjoy the sparkle and sharpness of your wit. It's a pity it should be lost on so small a circle," observed Mrs. Sattonstall.

A ring at the door was heard ere the words were fairly uttered, and in a moment the servant appeared with a card.

"Mr. Urban Worth," read Mr. Walter Sattonstall, in no remarkably pleased tone.

But a chorus of voices took it up joyfully.

"By Jove, that's lucky. How I've missed him!" ejaculated Eustace, springing up and hurrying off to the reception-room.

"We couldn't have had a more pleasing addition to the family party," said Edith, turning to Tristain. "You've never seen him, I suppose? But you'll be sure to like him. One of those people, you know, who always seem to understand the likings and dislikes of other. No matter what mood you are in, Mr. Worth never disturbs you, never grates upon you. He is like a sunbeam; whenever he comes it is sure to be warm and bright. Isn't that a good description of Mr. Worth, now, Anna? Say if you don't think it is."

Miss Merton's face was glowing with sincere pleasure. She nodded her gay acquiescence, and, with interlacing arms, the two ladies tripped away to the parlour.

Mr. Walter laid his hand on Tristain's shoulder. Had his own eyes been less grave and anxious, he might have noticed the stern pallor on the young man's face.

"It is no such thing, Tristain. Don't you believe any of their moonshine. The fellow is all show and glitter, and unmeaning amiability. There's no genuine manhood about him. I was in hopes the acquaintance of a steady, reliable man like you would have shown them their folly. But girls always will be simpletons; even Miss Merton is woman enough for that," said he, testily. "But come in and see the young man."

Tristain shrank nervously from the interview, yet a feverish curiosity led him to face its trying ordeal.

He should see Miss Merton and Urban in each other's society. Surely he should be able to read

upon her face the answer he so ardently desired to silence his fierce questionings.

He therefore followed Mr. Walter, sternly endeavouring to keep himself under command.

Eustace was still detaining his favourite in the reception-room. Edith, with one arm twined about her friend's neck, turned towards the door with eager gaze.

"Oh, it's only papa and Mr. Tristain," she said, in a disappointed tone.

"Only papa and Mr. Tristain," growled Mr. Walter. "The time will come, miss, I expect, when you'll be glad to depend upon 'only papa and Mr. Tristain'."

Edith danced over to him and kissed him.

"You dear, surly old bear, you know I love you better than all the gentlemen in the town. But you see we were waiting for the dawning of the star whose absence has made the fashionable world drear, dark, and forlorn, and shouldn't we feel honoured that his first visit is to us?"

"Drear, dark, and forlorn! I should like to know how much good the man has ever accomplished, what sort of an ornament he can be to society. I grant you he can dress his handsome person finely, and laugh very musically, and keep himself in good humour, when everybody flatters and coaxes him; but what is he in himself? What would he be in the world, deprived of his outward advantages?" demanded Mr. Walter, giving his daughter a playful shake.

Miss Merton came to the rescue.

"But, my dear sir, it is rather unjust to condemn a person who has not yet met with the trial combat which proves his knighthood. It is unfair to say, because he is surrounded with sunny experiences, that he cannot bear a stormy day."

"*Et tu Brute*," said Mr. Walter, playfully, but with a meaning glance.

She coloured to the very temples—a strange sight in one of her perfectly possessed, wonderfully controlled temperaments.

At that moment the young gentlemen entered.

Urban exchanged greetings with the master and lady of the house first, therefore Miss Merton had time to recover from her momentary embarrassment before he approached her.

She held out her white hand with unaffected cordiality, a pleasant smile of greeting on her lips, a clear, shining gladness in her eyes.

"Welcome back, Mr. Worth. It is pleasant to see you again."

Urban bent over the fair hand, with a graceful manner which made the watchful brother's heart sink like lead.

How handsome he was! How well his fresh, bright beauty became the rich clothing he wore! How natural he seemed, how thoroughly fitted for such a scene of luxurious ease. It was true. Urban was not made for the hard, cold, dismal trial scenes of the world; the sheltered sunny nooks were meant for him. His twin-brother possessed the sterner traits, and the gladness and the beauty were for Urban.

In the half-sheltered seat, behind the heavy folds of the silken curtains which Tristain had purposely taken, he watched it all, and was thankful to find that anger and bitterness did not arise—only a profound sorrow for himself for the quenching of this one hope which had power to make the world a fairy scene, so that it had only smiled upon him, however far off and distant.

Mr. Walter did not mean that his favourite should be ignored, and when the company were gathering about the new comer, eagerly attentive to his merry description of an adventure upon the way, he drew Tristain forward.

"Mr. Worth, here is a valued friend of mine to be introduced to you. Mr. Tristain, this is Mr. Worth."

Urban had turned around carelessly. Inimitable as his nonchalance could be, he could not repress a start, so great was his surprise.

The colour faded from his face, and he paled visibly, as he gave one swift glance into Mr. Sattonstall's face. Then he drew a breath of relief, bowed courteously, and extended his hand to his brother.

"Happy to see you, Mr. Tristain. Have no doubt I shall find your society very agreeable, for only agreeable people are found in this charmed spot," said he.

Tristain's face was like a rock. No trace of emotion could have been detected by the keenest eye. He returned the bow and sat down again.

"As I was saying," pursued Urban, turning to the young ladies, "the situation was comical in the extreme. Fancy me in the train, with three crying children to look after, and neither parent in sight, and the next station my resting-point. So much for disinterested proffers of assistance to humanity in distress."

Before he finished even Mr. Walter Sattonstall was wiping away the tears rolling down his cheeks, as much affected with sympathetic grief as he had previously been convulsed with merriment. Miss Merton's grave, serious eyes never left the eloquently expressive face.

"And now, having talked away all my breath, don't I deserve a little return at your hands? Miss Merton, if you would—if you could be so gracious to an undeserving mortal—I am hungering, famishing, I may say, for some of your music. I have been regaled with school-girl exercises, on poor pianos, badly tuned, in the country. Fair magician, just one touch of your lily fingers will send the discordant memory far away."

Playful though the tone might be, there was a winning, earnest respect beneath, which would have touched the iciest woman. Miss Merton's eyes shone upon him, though her lips were grave, as his story had made them. She rose at once, and he accompanied her to the piano.

Still in the shadow of the curtains, Tristain looked after them, as I imagine an ice-bound mariner might look through fancy's telescope towards his far-off, never-to-be-attained home, from out the cold and the dark—gazing upon warmth, light, and freedom's blissfulness, knowing he could never gain them.

Later in the evening, Urban, while reaching a portfolio of engravings resting on a stand near him, said, in a low voice:

"I am coming early to-morrow night to see you. You have not changed your quarters?"

"No," returned Tristain, softly, but colouring with mingled shame and anger as he saw Miss Merton's eyes fixed inquiringly upon his face.

"And no one suspects?" questioned Urban, adroitly slipping out a few engravings, and scattering them, to account for his delay.

"What a master he is of duplicity," thought Tristain, with something of his old contempt, but answering "No" again, he arose, and went away to the other side of the room, and, as soon as it was possible to break into the conversation, he walked up to Mrs. Sattonstall and said good-night.

CHAPTER VIII.

URBAN failed to keep his engagement. Neither the night appointed, nor the next, nor yet the next, did he appear, although Tristain was at home early every evening, and sat up late into the night, expecting him.

Exactly a week from that evening, at Mr. Sattonstall's, he made his appearance, looking a little ashamed, but still trying to carry it off in a brave style.

"I say, Tris, don't look so angry. I know it's rather hard on you, staying at home looking for me, but it couldn't be helped; now positively it couldn't. I kept thinking every morning to send a note, and say when I was coming, but I could never tell. Now this evening I've run away from a party on purpose to see you. The fact is, Tristain, I'm appreciated. I wasn't aware of it, you know, till I took myself off into the country."

"It is about the country I should like to hear," said Tristain, smoothing the frown from his forehead. "They were glad to see you there, I know that well enough."

"Indeed they were. But, between you and me, Tris, I was terribly annoyed. I'm more than ever determined no one here shall find out where this individual sprang from. Why, I couldn't believe it was the same house. Such a dingy, tumble-down, poverty-stricken old place, and such queer furniture. The old folks, too—to tell the truth, you can't imagine how dreadfully homespun they are. I never used to think father's 'sartain' sounded so. It makes me shudder to think of—somebody's hearing it."

"She wouldn't think any the less of the honest-hearted old man, if you mean Miss Merton," said Tristain, coldly.

"Well I do mean her; my beautiful Anna! So you've found out, have you?"

"Yes, I've found out," said Tristain, fiercely.

"You don't mean to interfere, do you?"

"No, I don't mean to interfere," replied Tristain, gloomily, "unless you try to deceive her. Then I'll step forward, and show the fine gentleman in his true colours."

"I shan't do that. I promised you I wouldn't. I'll tell her I haven't a shilling, only when I learn it. But it won't make any difference," said he, exultingly, "it won't make any difference with a girl like Anna Merton."

"I don't think it will," echoed Tris. "You have a task before you, Urban Worth, to make yourself worthy of her."

"Pshaw! when I have the control of that fine



[A BITTER TRIAL.]

fortune we'll see who'll dare to cast any insinuations upon me."

He said this with a gathering frown, as if recurring to some unpleasant experience.

"And coupled with the thought of winning her you have consideration for her fortune," ejaculated Tristain, bitterly. "Urban, Urban, is your heart formed of stone?"

"I think yours is rather too susceptible," cried out Urban, suddenly seizing his brother by the arm, and compelling him to bear his scrutinizing gaze. "By heavens, Tristain Worth, you have dared to love her yourself."

The sneer conveyed in the tone touched Tristain. His cheeks became scarlet with anger. His tall figure was more erect, his head was flung back, the eyes flashing with scorn and pride. At that moment he was again something like the hero of the railway catastrophe, so strong, valiant, and eager, he looked like a demi-god. For the moment Tristain was the handsomer man of the two.

"Well," said he, in a stinging tone of scathing irony, "it is atrocious daring in comparison with yours. I, a poor obscure, uncourted clerk, to venture to love a noble and beautiful heiress. No wonder the rich, honourable, and fastidious Urban Worth ventures to reprove me!"

"This is too bad!" ejaculated Urban, cowering beneath the withering glance of that flashing eye. "Tristain, I'm sorry for this. I've been picturing so long how pleasant a home I would make for you, how much I could give you. Tris, Tris, do try to get over it. It will spoil all my pleasure, thinking of you. There's Edie Sattontall, a sweet creature, I'm sure. Eustace was telling me yesterday how the old man is taken with you. Can't you contrive to like her, Tris? I know old Sattontall won't object. By Jove! what a nice arrangement it would be for both of us. Now, Tris—"

Tristain had turned away, his broad chest heaving. He put out his hand with an imperious gesture, and Urban paused.

"Urban, it is idle for me to talk to you. You do not know what love is, or you would not thus insult me. Let it pass. Say no more about it, and spare me any pity. I have borne a great many hardships and trials, and I can bear this. It is enough for you to know that I will in no wise interfere with you, while you do your best to deserve her. Heaven knows my sorest grief is that you are so unworthy of that noble woman! Remedy that, and you will do the best you can for my happiness. Now let us end the subject. Tell me about home. I am not afraid that it will look mean and small to me. That is one advantage

of these accommodations. How does my father seem?"

"He's broken down considerably, and seems to me a little more peevish than usual. But I'm in hopes to set him up before long."

"Not with Miss Merton's money, Urban. I swear to you I won't allow that!" burst out Tristain, vehemently. "I'll take care of father myself. I've nobody else to need my help, and I've always intended it. Thanks to Mr. Sattontall's generosity, it won't be the burden it has been."

"Well now, Tris, I must say that's magnanimous, and will save me a little tiresome managing. For I never will take Anna Merton there, nor have any of my acquaintances here know about them. It won't take a long time, you know, to hide it. They're pretty old now."

"Great heavens!" burst from Tristain. "Are you such a heartless wretch as to be calculating that death will take them out of your prosperous way? Urban, you are cheating me, you never meant that."

"Of course I didn't mean exactly that. You never will understand me, Tris, nor make any allowance for the position I occupy."

"Well, well, let us talk of something else. How is poor old Joe?"

"Joe? He was away until two days before I left. He's a regular simpleton. I was sorry enough I told Uncle Robert about that situation for him. He's grown to be a surly, disagreeable fellow."

"And the girls, and Rose Henderson? Did you have a pleasant time with them? I'll warrant you played off your pranks in fine style, and turned all their silly heads."

Urban ran his white fingers through his glossy curls, and stroked his moustache with conscious complacency.

"Oh, yes, I had a little fun. The poor things need a little change, after enduring those awkward creatures."

"Perhaps that's the trouble with Joe. Perhaps he's jealous."

"Pooh! why should he be jealous? A fellow can look at a pretty face, can't he? And Rose has got an uncommonly pretty face. Tris, she's just suited to her name."

"I hope you didn't annoy the poor girl. You couldn't have been so cruel, Urban," exclaimed Tristain, quick to catch alarm at the very idea.

"Pooh!" said Urban, and yet he coloured and looked away, uneasy beneath his brother's glance.

"Is Joe coming?" asked Tristain, after a long silence.

"I don't think he is; but there's no telling, he was so gruff with me. Something was said about his writing to you."

"I hope he will. Anyhow, I shall try to get home myself, when the warm weather comes. It will help father, and won't hurt me, to give him assistance at haying."

"Go home to help haying! you are a genius, Tris," he said, in a tone of supreme contempt.

A swift, iron hand whirled him round. Tristain's white, set face stared at him.

"Look here, Urban Worth, I am an honest man, one too honourable to stoop to mean deceits, too proud to pander to the world's whims for the sake of any place, position, or fortune. Have a care that you are nothing worse. Now go home. We shall quarrel if we talk any more, and heaven help me! we are twin-brothers, and should be friendly, if nothing else."

Urban took up his hat, and walked out, pretending anger, but really afraid to remonstrate.

Tristain stretched his arms out across the table and presently his head fell upon them. But he lifted it in a moment, with a proud movement.

"The world is hard on me, very hard, but I will fight manfully!" he said, and then went to his coat, took out a paper covered with figures, and set himself to work over them.

The next morning he received a note from Urban, filled with fine-sounding appeals to his sympathy and fraternal spirit, and affecting promises of future good behaviour.

It ended thus:

"I am going to learn my fate to-morrow. If you have any regard for the folks at home, say nothing concerning your unworthy brother, do nothing, I beseech you, to hinder my coming good fortune."

Tristain twisted the note, struck a match, and held it till the smooth, satiny paper was but a gray roll, which dropped to ashes in his grasp.

He smiled bitterly.

"Like my hopes. No matter, let him win all he can, act of mine shall not prevent him. But oh, that she should love him!"

Urban was sincere in that. He was determined to bear the tantalizing uncertainty no longer. Besides, his creditors were growing clamorous, and, poor weak wretch that he was! he had yielded again and again to the evil fascinations of the gaming-table, and was terribly in debt to the artful Dexter. He had also other vexations to haunt him, arising out of his visit to the country, which also urged him to precipitate steps.

(To be continued.)



[A CHANCE OF ESCAPE.]

CAPTAIN FRITTY.

CHAPTER I.

"I WONDER I do not die. This hard, cold, pitiless scene, how my eyes loathe and detest it," was spoken in a low, passionate voice of intense bitterness.

It was a gray sky, with black scuds drifting across it, which seemed to shut down menacingly above a dark sweep of cold-looking sea, whose waves broke in white swirls of foam upon the sharp rocks of a forbidding island shore. At the right huge boulders, like giant arms, projected far off from the land, forming a grim roofing, under which even large schooners, with sails set, might have scudded safely if managed by skill and courage.

On the other side rose sharply a massive craggy cliff, crowned with a rude habitation, perched, like an eagle's eyrie, on its topmost verge, which must have commanded a grand view, not alone of the cove and sound near at hand, but also of the distant channel, along which the white-winged birds of commerce were skimming to and fro on the pathway between the great sea-port and the wide, far-reaching ocean.

Between these, in the rear of the still figure standing there with an air of such tragic despair, was a tract of broken pasture-land, amidst whose broad patches of fern and bushes, one or two cows, and twice the number of sheep, were picking their scanty feed, scrambling up and down the rocks which abounded everywhere. For, indeed, almost the only level spot to be seen anywhere on the shore was this belt of smooth, sandy beach on the northern point of the dreary, desolate island on which the speaker stood.

It was a girl scarcely yet seventeen years of age, dressed in a coarse brown merino, in the simplest fashion, and her head was unprotected, save by its wealth of superb hair, of a glossy brown, which was black everywhere except in the sunshine, which hung in countless ringlets, twisting, turning, curling around her shoulder. Her feet, which were daintily moulded, and gleaming with ivory fairness from the coarse gray sand, were guiltless of covering, and so were the round, exquisitely shaped arms. It seemed that she had only lately strayed from the cottage on the cliff, since there was no sign of protecting hat or mantle.

She was standing upright, her head haughtily erect, but the arms were drooping wearily, and listless, and there was a touching expression on the

lovely lips of mingled flaming anger and wistful weary sadness.

Her eyes were fixed upon the distant line where the leaping waves of dead gray seemed to touch the leaden sky.

"It is horrible to live so," she exclaimed again, passionately stamping with the fairy, pearly foot. "Oh, this dreary, dreary prison. What have I done to deserve such a fate? I could lash myself against these grim rocks as I have seen the birds beat their wings against the iron bars of their cages; but of what avail? Oh, that something would save me, that any change, I care not what, might take me from this insupportable stagnation of life and soul, might give me wings to escape from my prison to fly away—away yonder, where the fairy land lies, the world, the beautiful world of which I know nothing, only what my books have taught me."

"Why, Dora, what a passion you're in! what is the matter?" exclaimed a voice, which made her start nervously, and turn swiftly, in time to see a tall, stalwart figure emerge from behind a great rock, which hid the winding path that gave access to the cliff.

"Jonas Weston! how came you here?" exclaimed the girl, in a voice of keen surprise.

"The schooner is moored down in the cove. I took the skiff and rowed round the point. I saw you coming and sat down below the rock there to wait for you. It must be dull enough for you on this lonesome island. Why don't you go back to town?" said Jonas, looking at the flashing eye of the girl with something beyond curiosity.

"Because I am kept here like a convict or a felon. Because I am not allowed to stir away from this odious spot. Do you wonder I think it better to die than waste my strength fretting against such prison bars?"

"You don't mean to say that they won't let you go away from here?"

"I do mean to say it, and if you have any keenness of observation you might have seen it for yourself. Just think of it. As far back as I can remember I have been here in this dismal place, and never once—no, not a single once—have I had a glimpse of anything beyond. No friends, no companions, no pleasures. Good heavens! I wonder sometimes that I have kept my senses. It was endurable when I was a child. I made playmates of the flowers, the birds, the waves, the very rocks themselves, and in my innocent fashion I was happy. But now I have outgrown the power of making illusions answer for reality. Sometimes I

think it were better Father Jean had not come to teach me the knowledge which shows me how poor and mean my life is beside the blissful freedom of more favoured lots. Much as I love books sometimes I think they have added to my misery by picturing the golden visions lying—there."

She flung her hand forth towards the distant pathway to the seaport, and her lip writhed again in its paroxysm of pain.

The young man was staring into her face as one looks upon a page traced with the characters of a foreign language with which he is unfamiliar, recognizing a word here and there, dimly guessing the purport of a single sentence, but losing the connection and true meaning of everything.

"It is queer, Dora, they keep you so close," said he, slowly; "the fishermen have all wondered at it, but no one has dared to say anything to your uncle."

"Is he my uncle, I wonder?" murmured she, in a musing tone. "I wonder sometimes if it can be possible there is a drop of the same blood in our veins, and he be willing to hold me to this wretched life."

A flicker of crafty intelligence crossed Jonas's face, and he moved towards her eagerly.

"Miss Dora," said he, "have you ever asked him about it?"

She laughed scornfully.

"Have I ever tried to move that rocky cliff yonder? One were as hopeless a task as the other. I have begged, I have implored, I have coaxed to learn some explanation of my being doomed to this desert spot, and he only looks at me coldly with that piercing glance of his, and bids me cease such idle ravings. He tells me to leave tormenting myself with unavailing conjectures, with hopeless desires, and be happy in my quiet and safe life. Be happy! Don't you wonder that I can smile at all, Jonas Weston?"

"It's too bad, Dora. It's a burning shame. You might have a great many little treats. Why, you could take a trip in one of the boats up to the city as well as not."

"I could; yes, I could, if only he would let me. Oh, what would I not give if I might go just once? I would not mind their anger. I would not care for any punishment if I might only go! Ah, Jonas, I would give anything, everything, just to go."

She had clasped her hands, her lips were apart with a thrilling, dreamy smile, her eyes shone with a feverish brilliancy, her whole face was kindled with a beauty almost startling.

A slow determination woke on Jonas Weston's face.

"Dora," said he, "I have a great mind to take you in my little schooner."

She gave a little scream of joy.

"Jonas, Jonas, do you mean it? Oh, I will bless you to my latest day."

"Only it will be an unpleasant thing to manage. I asked Madame Marie one day, half as if I was in sport, and I knew at once by the look of horror and anger on her face that I need not hope for it. There is a reason, certain, why you are kept in this fashion, if one could only find it out. But Captain Fritty and Madame Marie I don't believe, myself, are any of your kin."

"No, they are only my jailers. Don't you see that I am watched whenever any of you fishermen are at the island? I think they fear my running away. And no wonder. So I would, any minute, any day, if I could only find the means, if I know what to do, if I had a single friend—"

"You have a friend, Dora," said the young man, his eye glistening and his colour deepening on his cheek. "I should think you ought to know by this time how much I think of you."

"You are very kind, Jonas, but it is not very long that I have known you, and you never talked in this way before. Oh, will you, can you take me to the city? How can you elude their watchfulness; for I know they will not allow me to go? Oh, Jonas, dear Jonas, will you make me so happy?"

"I can manage it, I am sure, if only I can decide it is best to make the effort," answered he, confidently.

"And won't you try it?" in a tone of passionate entreaty.

"It depends upon circumstances—in fact, upon you, Dora."

"Upon me! then there is no question about it. I shall go."

"Do you wish it so much?" demanded he, searching over her agitated face with keen, earnest eyes.

"Of course I do, so much that I would give anything, everything I possess. I would go, though I knew countless perils filled all the distance. Oh, Jonas, you don't know how wildly, eagerly, I yearn towards that unknown world."

"Then you would be willing to give me something in return? I will certainly take you, Dora, if you will give me my price," exclaimed the young man.

"Your price? but I have no money," answered she, in a tone of keen disappointment.

"It is not money I ask. Dora, Dora, I love you dearly. I want you to promise to marry me."

A blank look of perplexity and amazement displaced the glowing smile which had broken across her lips.

"To marry you! But how can that be? They would not consent. You know they would not allow it."

"I could manage it, if only you were willing, dear Dora. If you will only give me your solemn promise. If you only swear in the sight of heaven that when I come for you you will be willing and ready to marry me."

The girl was looking down, working her small foot to and fro in the sand, an expression of doubt and perplexity on her face.

"To marry you, Jonas? That is so strange. It frightens me a little to think of it."

"Don't you like me, Dora?" questioned he, in a tone of keen reproach.

"Why, yes, of course, you have been kind to me. I have no dislike for you," was answered, slowly.

"You don't love anyone else better?" demanded he, fiercely.

A low, musical laugh rippled over her exquisitely shaped lips.

"How could that be, unless I fell in love with some of those weather-beaten old fishermen? You are the sole young man of my acquaintance, Jonas."

"Then why do you hesitate about the promise?" he asked, testily.

"I can't tell why, except that—that—well, Jonas, I have had pictures in my mind of the sort of people out there in that grand, beautiful world, so near, and yet so far from me, and my hero was not like you exactly."

"I daresay not," answered Jonas, dryly; "but you'll find, Dora, a great many worse men than I am, there, and very few like our book heroes. I can tell you. Besides, you will not find them at all, you will never get your glimpse of that world, unless I help you."

"That is true. I shall never leave the island unless you help me to it," she said, in a hesitating voice.

"I will take you all over the world, when once you are my wife. I will make up to you all you have been denied here."

"Over the world, the beautiful world," cried she,

in a rich, vibrant voice. "Oh, what happiness! And if I remain here, I shall die of weariness and grief."

And yet she stood hesitating, a vague disquietude haunting her, a dim premonition of the greatness of the price demanded lurking in her mind.

"Is there nothing else, Jonas, that would do? I will promise you all the money I shall ever get, and sometimes, from little words let fall, and significant looks between this man who calls himself my uncle and Madame Marie, I fancy there may be a great fortune awaiting me somewhere."

"Humph! don't you see, unless I help you, it would do no good—you here a prisoner on this lonely island where no one comes except these few fishermen?"

"I will appeal to them. I wonder I have never thought of it before. I cannot think why I have submitted so passively to this hard fate. Some of them will surely have compassion and help me."

She said this in a prompt, resolute tone, which alarmed the youth for the success of his hopes, and the long-pondered plan which he had hoped to execute this very night. He tried to answer earnestly and indifferently:

"You might as well try to soften these rocks, Dora. I have talked with them myself, and none of them were willing to help me in giving you a little freedom. They said it was none of their business to meddle; that Captain Fritty was your natural guardian, and the law would sustain him. Besides, after all, what harm was there? He didn't hurt you nor starve you; you were better off here, and out of the mischief pretty girls are always getting into, and Captain Fritty was a good neighbour, and not a pleasant person to anger. That's the way they talked to me; but you can try then."

"Enough! I shall not trouble them!" exclaimed the girl, with passionate haughtiness. "Didn't hurt nor starve me! Do they think the body is all? That the soul, the mind, the heart make no demand for food, and cannot pine and wilt?"

"They are coarse, hard men, Dora; they cannot see as I do, that this life is worse than torture for you. Hist, girl! from that first day I saw you when I came in Dixon's boat to help unload the fish, and you were walking on the beach here, I have loved, adored and pitied you. What else, think you, made me leave the gay scenes of the town, my free life on the water, and join the miserable set here? It was for your sake, to see you. And the more I saw of you, Dora, the more I loved you, and the more my blood boiled at this tyrannical guard kept over you by these people. And I pleased myself with grand visions. I said I will win her love, and steal her from that desolate pile of rock, if there is no other way. And I will take her over the world. She shall see the gay city, with its gay shows, its elegant buildings. She shall go with me into luxuriant gardens, which shall seem to her like glimpses of Eden after that barren land. I will dress her in glistening silks, and put bright ribbons and gold ornaments to adorn that wonderful beauty of hers, and I will offer my allegiance to her, and she shall be my queen! This is what I said, Dora."

The young man spoke these words swiftly, and the colour was drifting across his brown cheek, and his eyes were sparkling with eagerness and earnestness. He was not a disagreeable picture as he stood there before her, with his lithe but sturdy form, erect and fearless, his hair tossing in the bleak wind which swept from the water.

Dora was looking at him searchingly, with keen, wistful eyes. Her lips trembled as she said:

"You are very kind to me, Jonas. I am sure I, who am so forlorn and destitute of friends, ought to appreciate you. I want to go—oh, I can never make you understand how much I want to go—and yet—"

"Am I so disagreeable then? Oh, Dora, it is hard when I have tried to be so kind and tender with you," interposed Jonas, in a reproachful tone.

"No, no, you are not disagreeable. I like you, Jonas; indeed, how can I help it when you are the only one that is kind to me? But I have a strange sort of impression that I ought not to promise so much as that. Everything is so strange, so untried, so mysterious, that lies beyond this poor, cramped little world of mine. How dare I promise anything, not knowing what new experiences may come to me?"

Jonas Weston swept his hand across his forehead, hiding the look of angry resentment which blazed within his eye.

"Well, I am very sorry for you, Dora, that is all. I had everything so nicely planned. There's even a pretty shawl and a hat with blue ribbons in my chest in the little cabin of the boat, which I was going to give you to wear when I took you through the city to-morrow afternoon. I'm bitterly disappointed, I'm sure. But if it can't be helped, it can't. And if this is all the answer you will give my love, why, I may as well leave off com-

ing to the island. I'll sail with that fruit-vessel whose captain has been coaxing to have me for a second mate all the month."

With his hands still across his eyes, Jonas watched the effect of this speech.

The girl trembled and turned pale.

"What, Jonas, go away? My only friend go away and leave me, without the hope of a future release; don't—don't, Jonas, I beg of you."

"What's the use of my remaining to be treated in this fashion? I've told you, honestly, that I loved you, that I wanted you for my wife. I've offered to give you liberty and all you ask. And you will not give me that little promise. It will cost you so little," he said, pleadingly. "I can tell you, it will make a regular squall in my affairs. Besides, I am not one of your book-heroes, Dora. I am a common mortal. And I love you, and want you for my wife. It is for that and I have planned and hoped, and toiled. I should be foolish to let slip any chance of accomplishing my wishes."

"And do you think it could be done—that I could really get away?" she said, doubtfully.

There went a little glint of renewed hope across his eye.

"Of course I do. I have left my gallant little boat outside the cove, and have two men on board her whom I can trust. The weather is more usually than I looked for, but it is all right; I know every creek and turn of the bay, every current and rock in this vicinity. You have only to appear to go to bed as usual, and when they are asleep steal out softly, and come down to the beach, where I will meet you with my skiff, and row you out to my craft."

"We have only to shake out the sails, then, and go for freedom and happiness!"

Her hands were clasped, her eyes fixed on his, her breath came flutteringly, as she replied, almost in a whisper:

"And I may really go? Oh, Jonas!"

"Yes, Dora, you may go. It rests with you to decide. But you must give me that promise."

"There is my dragon. Did you see Madame Marie's head peeping out of the door? She has spied you talking with me. Let us walk on up the cliff, as if you were coming to the house."

While she spoke the girl moved slowly up the steep path winding around the ascent to the top of the cliff. And her companion kept close at her side.

"Well, Dora," said he, as they were almost at the house, speaking in an impatient though subdued voice, "what have you decided?"

"I will be there, Jonas. I can't lose this chance to obtain the freedom I have yearned for."

"Then you will give me the promise?" cried he, eagerly, his eye flashing triumphantly.

"Yes," replied Dora, in a voice which was scarcely audible, "I will give you the promise."

"Now and here?" demanded the young man, suddenly seizing her fair, round arm and lifting it upward to the sky. "You swear in the sight of heaven that you will marry me when I ask it. You call on heaven to witness it. If you should refuse to fulfil the promise, you declare your soul perjured for ever."

Dora shuddered at the fierce vehemence of his look, the hoarse desperation of the tone, but she answered, unhesitatingly:

"I do, I do, Jonas Weston. I promise it because I am frantic to escape from this prison—because this life has grown unendurable."

He still held her arm aloft, his face glowing with fierce triumph, and she was gazing back, with dreamy eyes, on the distant swell of the sea, which symbolised for her all freedom, and gladness, and hope, when, with hasty steps, almost running in the eagerness to reach them speedily, came a man of nearly sixty years of age, dressed plainly, a trifle more neatly than the common run of fishermen, his keen black eyes sparkling angrily, his eyebrows knitted in a frown, and his long gray locks streaming behind him.

"What is this, Master Jonas? Take care. What is the girl promising?" cried he, sharply.

Jonas Weston dropped the girl's arm, and turned with a careless laugh.

"Ah, Captain Fritty, are you there? I'm making Dora promise to be here on this island, if she's alive, come two years this day. I'm making up my mind to take a good voyage, and leave alone these fishing-smacks."

"What is her being here to you, youngster?" growled the old man; "though there's little danger of her leaving the place."

"Why, nothing particular, of course, only we are good friends, are we not, Dora?"

"I suppose so," answered the girl, with a little shiver, which Jonas was not too dull to heed, and he mentally registered a vow to remember it, when the right time came.

"Well, Dora, I shan't forget the promise. Good-bye till I come again. Captain Fritty, what do you make of the weather?"

"A dull spell, a dull spell, Mr. Jonas Weston. When are you going to run up to the port with your boat?"

"Some time to-morrow, or next day. Whew! how those scuds fly. I wouldn't be surprised if we had something of a blow to-night."

And the young fisherman walked carelessly to and fro, over the rocky path, apparently quite heedless that Dora had slipped quietly through the cottage door, and disappeared from view.

Captain Fritty watched him uneasily from under his shaggy brows, and presently broke forth, abruptly:

"Look here, Jonas Weston, because this girl of mine is growing into good looks I'll not have you or anybody else hanging round here. She's not far the likes of you, you understand."

"You think her beauty will bring a grandee into your net, do you? Or is there someone waiting for her already picked out, eh, Captain Fritty?"

An ireful glance and smothered oath were the only answers.

"Well, well, captain, I don't want to plague you. I am going a long voyage, so you won't be troubled by my hanging around the place. A young fellow can't help speaking a few civil words to a pretty girl like that, and you don't ought to blame me for it. Besides, the poor thing is kept enough here. It's almost a charity to give her a smile."

"Don't trouble your mind about her, I say. I'm her guardian, and I know what is required of me."

"Humph! required of you? Then there is someone else who is interested in her and holds you accountable," said Jonas, smiling triumphantly at the chagrined look which his shrewd guess brought to the old man's face. "One might suspect that there were good reasons for keeping the poor girl secluded here, as snugly as if she was a prisoner. However, as you say, it's none of my business, and this is my last visit to the island before crossing the ocean. Good-day to you, Captain Fritty. I must be off to look after the schooner's loading."

And, whistling merrily, Jonas Weston turned on his heel and descended the cliff.

"The Evil One take him," muttered the old man. "It would be a bad business if he should come prying around just now, of all times, when I am looking for a visit. I hope the foreign voyage will not only take time, but keep him on the other side of the ocean."

CHAPTER II.

The wind had not gone down with the sun, but went raging like a maddened spirit, tossing the waves into white ridges of foam, and sweeping rudely across the barren island. Not a star was to be seen, but yet there was a dim light pervading the scene, because of a moon approaching its full, which feebly diffused its gloom through the black clouds, which shut out its face from view.

The fishermen on the other side of the cove made fast their boats, and retired willingly to the shelter of their own firesides.

The cattle were snugly in the pen, the sheep huddled together in the fold.

Not a soul was visible on the whole island when Captain Fritty, just as the gloomy twilight faded, took his nightly reconnaissance from the rock behind the house, which gave a sweeping view of the whole island, as well as of the bay.

The wind hustled off his hat, and tossed his gray hairs over his forehead, and one or two big drops splashed down his forehead.

"Ugh, an ugly night!" said he, as he shut the door, and came back to the fireplace where Madame Marie had kindled a bright fire of brushwood, whose cheery glow illumined the room. "It will be an ugly night, dame. I wouldn't care to be in a ship driving on a leeward shore. It would be as dark as Erebus, if it wasn't for the moon."

Dora was sitting by the window, a book in her hand, the taper forefinger left in for a mark, at the page where she had closed it when the light failed. She looked up quickly, and then shook her rich clusters of curly hair over her face to hide its triumphant smile.

"Let the darkness come; it will be the better for my escape. I would dare any peril, anything, everything, to break away from this distasteful scene," she thought.

Madame Marie, a singular-looking person, tall, square, angular, without a pound of superfluous flesh on her body, and with well-knit muscles that gave hint of strength beyond her years and sex, paused abruptly as she was crossing the room to put away the last dish in the closet, with a mingled

expression of awe and alarm in her faded gray eyes, and asked, hurriedly:

"Isn't it time for the steamer? You don't suppose she is on the coast to-night, do you?"

Dora's furtive glance through the screening curls showed her a quick, warning gesture from Captain Fritty directed to the speaker.

"No, I don't think the passenger steamer is quite so far. She won't show herself in the strait for a couple of days yet, according to my reckoning."

Madame Marie went to the window, and looked out. The darkness was falling so swiftly, and the waves broke in such high swirls of foam, she could not see the distant strait.

"Heaven save all coast-driven ships," sighed she, and, sitting down, rocked herself to and fro, uneasily.

Dora laid aside her book, put back her hair from her eyes, and startled them by saying, abruptly:

"Aunt Marie, was I ever in a ship that came across the ocean?"

"What put that in your head, child?" asked the woman.

But Captain Fritty saved her any attempt at evasion.

"Of course you were, Dora. Don't you know that we brought you here when you were only a little babe? We came in a ship, then. It won't be likely to help your knowledge of ships now," he added, with a laugh.

"I wish I could go back, in that ship or any ship," said the girl, in a dreamy tone, fixing her large serious eyes on the fire.

"You are always wishing something equally useless and foolish," retorted Captain Fritty, coldly.

"I wonder why you took the trouble to bring me so far," continued Dora, clasping her slender hands across her knees, and still eyeing the blazing brushwood.

Madame Marie smiled bitterly, and looked over to see what her husband would answer.

"Was there ever such a strange creature? Who should have brought you if not we? Are you not our niece? Have you any other friend in the world except your Aunt Marie and me?" answered the old man, with a faint sneer.

"Can one be a friend, and not love? I never thought so. Well, it does not matter, only I wonder you took so much trouble, and for so little use."

"So little use! Hear the ungrateful child, dame."

"Very little use, indeed, sir, to take the trouble to bring a child away across the ocean, to feed and care for it, and then give it to the desolate existence like this of mine. I take it that it had been better to have tossed the poor little wail to the mercy of the waves. I, at least, feel now that I would have thanked you for it."

"You ought to know how some people fare. How many poor girls are forced to toil till their arms drop in weariness, their backs stoop with pain and weakness, and they wish for death to relieve their misery. What do you know of the terrible pangs of hunger? The stinging torments of cold? The aching limbs of steady, relentless toil? And yet I tell you there are hundreds and hundreds of young girls, as tender and sensitive as you, only as far off from us to-night as the city up there in the bay, who are suffering thus to-night."

The beautiful eyes, deepening to horror, were fixed upon his face.

"Pitiful heaven! can this be so? Tell me, Aunt Marie, is this so?" demanded Dora, huskily, turning to the woman.

"It is true," answered Madame Marie, folding her hands across her knees and returning the young girl's gaze steadily.

A dead pallor fell upon the fair features as Dora murmured:

"Oh, my fairy world! it is crumbling before I touch it."

"See your ingratitude," went on Captain Fritty, with a dull gleam of satisfaction in his rebuke. "Here are you, sullen, unhappy, obstinate, though you are spared all these horrors. Instead of being blithe and gay of heart, like your kinsmen yonder, you refuse to sing, you beat uselessly against your cage, which is only meant in kindness to keep you from harm. Mark you, uselessly, for all it avails is to wound the rebellious wings. Why can you not make the best of your lot, Dora, and be happy here?"

A wild, bitter smile gathered over her beautiful face, illumined by the crimson firelight, as the girl rose to her feet, extending her hand in vehement gesture.

"I will tell you why, Uncle Fritty," said she; "because it is not in my nature. Will the eagle be content to crawl sluggishly along the sands, its highest ambition to mount some spray-washed rock and doze in the sunshine, its deepest joy to drift with the waves, like the turtle down yonder on the shore?"

—an eagle that feels its wings, and is drawn by wild, nameless yearning every time it lifts its glance to the sky, or beyond the free spaces stretching into the invisible distance."

Captain Fritty laughed scornfully.

"An eagle, indeed. Presumptuous child, you are among the humblest of the humble, a helpless dependant upon the charity of a poor, broken-down mariner—compare yourself to an eagle!"

The cold sneer seemed to sting her to anger. Her face grew cold and white, while the eyes burnt with a brilliancy that was almost dazzling.

Madame Marie, leaning forward, one elbow on her knee, the hand supporting her head, with her eyes watching the girl steadily, slowly, said, mumbling the words half between her breath:

"It may be so. Nature is whimsical sometimes; but she keeps her own plans—aye, she keeps her own plans."

Dora did not heed her words. She had turned in the white heat of her passion towards the old man.

"It is false," she said, vehemently. "I do not believe a word of all you try to impress upon me. I am no relative of yours, and I do not believe I am a beggar either. Moreover, I am certain that it is for keeping me here that you receive the income which supports you. There, I have told you at last, and I am thankful for it. I have had it on my mind long enough."

The old man seemed to enjoy her fierce passion.

"Indeed," he said, in a cool, ironical voice, which maddened the youthful listener more than any anger.

"Pray inform us whence you derived this exceedingly interesting information. You are not a beggar. Be so good as to point out in what gold mine, or bank vault, your princely dowry is invested."

"Set me free from this hateful prison and I will find it," said Dora, stamping that tiny, daintily proportioned foot.

"Ah, indeed, you are an eagle, yet you ask me to give you wings."

"I ask you to take off the thongs with which you have bound them, Captain Fritty."

"Captain Fritty. Oh, oh! I am too humble a character to be acknowledged any longer as a relative of the noble eagle. You hear, Marie, the girl disowns the relationship."

"Yes, I deny it," cried Dora, her whole form trembling beneath the anger he had aroused, enjoying it as some enjoy tormenting a spirited animal. "There is proof enough in your own actions. You pretend to care for me, but you secretly hate me. You have not a particle of love for me, either of you, and I am not so stupid or dull-eyed that I cannot see it."

"An eagle again. An eye that can pierce everything, can look undaunted on the sun. But with clipped wings," laughed the old man, a sardonic glitter in his eyes.

"Yes, they are clipped, but they will grow again. I warn you of it, and I shall spread them, and fly away, fly away," answered Dora, harshly.

And, sweeping back the rich veil of curling hair from her pale face, she gave him a long, steady, defiant glance, and walked slowly with the haughty grace of a queen, for all her poor garments and bare feet, into the little room opening from the family serving-room.

Madame Marie looked after her thoughtfully.

"Fritty," said she, musingly, "the child is right. We do hate her, both of us."

"I don't need your telling it to find it out," said the old man, in a surly voice.

"Nor you won't want me to let you know that you are as sick and disgusted with this life as she is, I suppose."

"What good would it do?"

"It does no good to torment the girl as you like to; at all events she has the spirit of her race. Nature ain't apt to lie. If I didn't remember what lies in her power, I should pity her, you are so unmerciful, and her life is so dreary."

The old man did not answer. He had leaned back in his chair, folded his arms, and fixed his eyes upon the fire.

His wife rocked herself to and fro, her eyes roving around the room with a dreary haze floating over the pale blue depths.

"Sixteen years! sixteen years come Easter, since we set foot on the island. It has changed its aspect. It looked like an Eden of refuge then. Here we were safe. No more hunting down, no more pinching wants, no dreary cares and wearing toil scantily repaid. I remember so well how glad and high my heart was beating when I entered this cottage for the first time. No queen just receiving her crown was half so jubilant."

The low, dreamy tones died out slowly, and several moments of profound silence followed, broke only by the rattling of the window casements and the roar

of the wind as it came in gusts, sweeping across the rocky cliff.

Captain Fritty had dropped his head to his breast, and there came a softened look to the lips which had curled upon Dora in such an angry sneer. He rose presently, went to the door through which the girl had vanished, and, opening it, glanced into the little entry.

"She is not there, I heard her go up to the attic," said Madame Marie, quietly. "Do you know, Fritty, sometimes I sit here picturing how different it would be if the girl was gone, and someone else were in her place. What a gay, jolly place it would be for us. And he, how he would enjoy going out in the fishermen's boats. Boys are always bewitched with anything which sails on the water. Perhaps it had been as well in the end. That is what frets me."

"Humph! what are you talking about?" said Captain Fritty, angrily; but his face looked uneasy and gloomy; "this storm has set your wits astray."

"No, it is not the storm, I am just so on the brightest days. I have nothing to do but sit here and think. And since the present is so tame and dull, I have only to go over the past, or try to peer into the future. What use in your trying to hide it, Fritty? it is the same with you. I hear you muttering about it in your dreams. I think we are getting childish as our years drop silently one by one, silvering the hair, unnerving the mind, and stealing away the strength. We are homesick, both of us. We are no longer contented to be exiles; we long to lay our bones upon our native soil. And it might have been, Fritty; that is what troubles me—it might have been if we had not this girl. If we had taken our own and faced the matter honestly."

"You are leaving out of the question that facing the matter is just what we couldn't do. There was that cursed prison haunting me, and poverty and disgrace. We were driven into the path we took, and, as you say, we were very thankful to find so much smoothed under our feet."

"Yes, we thought so then. It is only of late that I have questioned it. For, after all, we left the best behind—home, fatherland, and the only living being who bears a drop of our blood in his veins. That is where the sting comes, to think that we are doing without his love. That others receive his smiles, his tender words, his loving looks. *Mon Dieu!* that thought would poison my bliss if I were in Paradise."

The woman pushed back the thin, grizzled locks from her forehead, and looked up into her husband's face with a sickly smile on her quivering lips.

"But you wouldn't ruin the lad, Marie," said the old man, his own hard features softening. "You know he is better off without us. You should rejoice that we have secured for him a fortune and life so much beyond anything in our power to give, except for this absence."

"I know, I know. I try to reason it over to myself, but I am weak and selfish. And I think it is why, as she says, I hate this girl, that every time she looks at me, or speaks to me, I think it might be my own, and it is not, it is not."

"Ugh, how the wind rocks the very stone foundation of the cottage. It is a wild night. I say, Marie, you shall go up to the town and stay a little while. You are sick to death of this cursed island, and no wonder either. I'll stay and look after the girl, and you will come back cheered up."

"No, no, it would not help me; no change of scene in this country would avail. If I could only go back home, indeed. Dear, dear, how it haunts me. I see it always, waking or sleeping; the pleasant hillside crowned with vineyards, the white road with its rows of poplars. The villa and the chateau in the distance, even the little wayside shrines, where once you found me hanging garlands. Fritty, do you remember? Heaven save us, it must be forty years ago, and I was only a merry, thoughtless lass. Forty years! forty years. And we are here on this dreary island, the broad land and the wider ocean rolling between us and that dear old spot. The life is very strange, very weary, and very sad. Our poor little Lisette, I cannot mourn that her troubles ended early."

"Why do you talk of all these things to-night, Marie?" said Captain Fritty, resentfully. "I think the night itself is dismal enough."

She shook her head mournfully.

"They are in my heart every night, Fritty, but the girl's behaviour set my tongue to talking of them. Yes, it is a wild night. If that steamer should be due, and anything should happen to her mails—"

"It will take a worse storm than this to harm one of that staunch line. I have a presentiment, Marie, that the next news will make a change for us. You know the master refused to have us back, but he hinted something in his letter about giving us a glimpse of the boy—"

"Ah, the fine handsome youth he must be! He had Lisette's eyes. *Mon Dieu!* I should almost die with joy to look upon him."

Marie started up from her seat, her large, bony hands clasped, her eyes ashine, while her whole face was illumined with a smile that seemed almost ecstatic.

Captain Fritty watched her uneasily.

"If the master saw you looking like that he would take fine care that you never set eyes on him," said he.

She turned suddenly, the lips drawn away savagely from the stunted, broken teeth, and hissed rather than spoke:

"What care I for that man? Would to heaven he had perished, ere I, or a child of mine, ever set eyes upon his deceitful face!"

"Come, come, what's the use of quarrelling with your destiny, Marie? Don't talk any more to-night. It's time we put out the fire and went to bed. It's a night for sound sleeping."

"Yes," said Madame Marie, her face settling to its accustomed look of stoical gravity and indifference, "men can sleep."

(To be continued.)

THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER.

"But she is only a farmer's daughter!"

The speaker as he said these words took his cigar from his mouth, and looked at his friend as if he had decided the question.

They were young men. Both had an air of refinement. But there was a marked difference in the faces of the two. The speaker had a handsome countenance, but it was wanting in force. His companion, on the contrary, had a face that distinguished him at once as one born to be "a ruler of men."

"Look here, Harry," was his reply. "You and I ought to be above that nonsense. We live in a country where one occupation, provided it be honest, is just as honourable as another. To be a farmer or a mechanic is as reputable as to be a lawyer or a banker."

"Good heavens, Jack!" was the response, "how wildly you talk. With your antecedents, too. Born in the best society, educated at one of our first universities, travelled, rich—I declare I don't know what to think of you."

The other laughed pleasantly.

"I don't believe you do, Harry. But in this matter you ought to understand me. I tell you I am going to marry Miss Beaumont, and you answer, as if your argument was incontrovertible, 'She is a farmer's daughter.' Now if you had said she was vain, or a flirt, or stupid, bad hearted, or ignorant, you would have said something to the point. Come, give me a light; I have talked so much that my cigar has gone out."

"But you don't mean to say that birth and education go for nothing? that culture doesn't become hereditary? isn't bred in the bone, muscle and brain?"

"You have never heard the story of the lion that wrote his own history, have you, Harry? Oh! I thought you hadn't. Well, all our *littérati* are doing the same thing. They wish to get up a notion that there's a sort of Brahmin caste here, an intellectual aristocracy, and that they—heaven preserve us!—are its high priests. Now, my lad, it's the real bone and sinew of this land, the actual workers, who will be both its brain and its aristocracy. All our great men have come from the people. And our greatest women, let me tell you, are the women of the people."

"Lord! Jack—"

"Stop. Let me finish. I don't wish to be misunderstood. Culture, I admit, is an excellent thing, though true culture does not consist merely in knowing how to be graceful, to dress well, or even to talk about art; but there are other things more needful than culture in a wife—and a great womanly heart is the first of these. Now I don't assert that because a woman is rich and, as you say, 'well born,' she cannot have such a heart; but I do assert that her riches and birth certainly do not give it to her. In fact neither the very rich nor the very poor are as likely to have this quality as one belonging to what you, with your phraseology, would call the 'middle class.' To find a really healthy and perfect flower you must not look in a hothouse or a desert."

"Oh! I don't mean to say a word against Miss Beaumont personally," said Harry, with some embarrassment. "Of course she is all you declare. I was only speaking in the abstract. Certainly she's very handsome. But for all that, Jack, she is only a farmer's daughter—and what will your sisters say to it?"

"It will make little difference to me what they

say. Probably they will try to snub her. So much for a fashionable education. Had my four sisters"—and his voice then had a touch of sadness—"not been so rich perhaps they would have been better women. There is no truer saying than that a restless egotism is the curse of wealth."

"Well, I give you up," answered his companion, knocking the ashes from his cigar; "you talk like an agrarian, like a *sans culotte*, like a Chartist, like—like—Good heavens, Jack! you don't know how you talk."

"I talk, I hope, like a man of sense. I see around me, in our fashionable society, chiefly giddy girls or fast women; and I don't want any such material as that in a wife. I want someone, on the contrary, who will know how to bring up her children in the fear of God, who will think her home her true sphere, and who will love her husband a little more, at any rate, than her pet ponies or her last Paris bonnet. I want a companion and a helpmate."

"And such you have found in Miss Beaumont?"

"Such I have found in Miss Beaumont. You acknowledge that she is beautiful. She is well educated too, not in the sense of having acquired mere accomplishments, but in the higher sense. She is a companion, intellectually, for any man. The mere surface-varnish, which you call the air of good society, she can acquire readily, for she has tact, a good heart, and natural grace. If she had been born to a great fortune and bred in fashionable life her naturally fine nature might have been corroded by selfishness; as it is, being only a farmer's daughter, she is 'the noblest Roman of them all.' And you'll live to admit it, Harry."

"Oh! I'll admit it now," replied Harry, with perfect sincerity, as he rose up to go. "I don't see how it is that you and Holmes can settle these things, but you were too clever for me at college, and have been so ever since, and all I know is that I've always found you right in the long run, and so I am sure you must be right here. But, bless me, Jack! what a fuss your sisters will make."

"One word, Harry, before you go," said his companion, laughing at the dismal face of his friend. "Don't fancy I marry Miss Beaumont because she is a farmer's daughter, though, as I have just said, even that has its advantages. I should have married her, if she would have had me, had she been a princess just as soon. What I marry is the woman, and I, or any other true man, ought to marry the woman he loves, and who is worthy of his love, whether she be beggar or queen."

"Good-by, good-by! It shan't make any difference in me, old fellow."

Jack had another good laugh after his old college chum had left. Jack had wide sympathies and a broad intellect; he liked Harry for his good heart and for old associations, but he often had a laugh, as he did now, at the weaknesses of his friend.

"Poor Harry!" he said, "he'll marry some fashionable girl and sink into the life of the clubs, and never know either what he has missed. But there must be human oysters, I suppose. As for me, I aspire to something higher."

To aspire usually is to win. Jack won. He married Miss Beaumont in spite of all that his sisters said, and to the amazement, we must admit, of most of his male friends. But time vindicated his choice. His wife proved to be in every sense of the word a helpmate. She was his companion, his counsellor, his best friend.

Five years have passed, and Jack is now a distinguished Member of Parliament; but he traces much of his success and all of his happiness to his having made a wise choice in a wife.

J. H. D.

"JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDE."—A little boy, the son of a labourer at Driffield, Yorkshire, named Holmes, in attempting to drive a cat from under a stool, kicked his sister, a girl of fourteen, behind the ankle; and she died of the injury a week afterwards. A coroner's jury has found a verdict in the case of "Justifiable homicide."

SIGNS OF A HARD WINTER.—"Birds of passage," says the *Nord*, "have begun their annual migrations southwards through Belgium a month earlier this year than usual. Already long lines of storks have taken flight; bustards have been killed in the neighbourhood of Paris, and wild ducks have passed in such numbers that the eye cannot follow them. All this, as is known, presages a hard winter."

FAMINE IN SICILY.—To the horrors of cholera have been superadded in Sicily the horrors of famine. A drought, which has now lasted nearly two years, has arrested and parched up vegetation, and has deprived the flocks and herds of the food necessary for their sustenance. The cities and towns are deserted by the wealthier inhabitants, the shops are closed, the markets scantily supplied.



[THE FATAL ROCKS.]

AT THE SEA SHORE.

THERE was a sort of murmuring, "sensation" on the wide, thronged terrace of the fashionable sea-side hotel that summer afternoon as Miss Trevor came out in her long dress of white *berige*, a loose white scarf fluttering from her shoulder, and a snowy plume hovering like a white puff of vapour on the edge of her little Spanish hat.

Julia Trevor liked to go through the world in that way. From her childhood she had always been accustomed to make a sensation wherever she went. Homage was her natural atmosphere; attention and adoration were as essential to her as the air she breathed. In fact, Julia Trevor was as nearly spoiled as a woman can be who possesses a fine nature and a warm, impulsive heart.

"Julia! I'll be all right when once she settles down," said Mr. Trevor, when his wife bewailed to him, in conjugal confidence, their pretty daughter's habitual flirtations.

"Yes," said the mother, half sighing, half smiling, "but it takes her such a long time to settle down."

Mrs. Trevor was right.

Julia was tall and magnificently moulded, with superb brown hair, hazel eyes, and a profile as faultless as that of the Venus de Milo, while her lovely mouth could express either the sweetest sympathy or the haughtiest scorn—scorn which seemed to wither you like an intense flame.

As she passed down the beach path, with her white draperies trailing after her, and a single damask rose, fragrant and perfectly shaped, hanging from her heavy coils of hair, Alban Meredith rose up and joined her.

"What a magnificent morning for a sail, Miss Trevor!"

"Is it?"

Julia was not inclined to be communicative. Mr. Meredith paused a moment and then continued:

"The Sea Gull is lying at the little pier with her wings all unfurled ready for a flight—will you honour her and me by your companionship this morning?"

"Thank you, I don't care to sail."

Alban's brow slightly contracted; he bit his lip.

"Miss Trevor, will you please to explain yourself?"

"Mr. Meredith, I am not aware that my speech stands in need of any interpretation."

"Not your speech, perhaps, but your manner—your tone."

"I am not bound to render an account of my tone or manner to you or any other gentleman, Mr. Meredith."

Alban bowed his head haughtily.

"I stand reproved, Miss Trevor. Hereafter I shall not trouble you again. Good morning."

She held out her hand indifferently; his grasp, cold as marble, closed on it with involuntary vehemence.

"Is this to be a final parting, Miss Trevor?"

"I suppose so, if you persist in going to New Zealand."

"Would you rather I should remain here?"

Julia raised her eyebrows with that beautiful insolence which maddens you even while you cannot but admire its cool, audacious grace.

"Would I rather? Really, I have not taken the trouble to form any opinion on the subject."

"Then it is a final good-bye."

He bowed again over her hand and was gone before she could read the effect of her scornful words upon his dark Castilian face.

Julia walked on, drawing the carved point of her parasol through the silver softness of the gleaming sands, mechanically picking up tiny shells, and

pearl-white stones polished to dazzling smoothness by the beating tides of centuries; but she was thinking of Mr. Meredith all the time.

"They say there is the blood of Spanish princes in his veins," she mused to herself, with a curious kind of dimple in her cheek. "Alban Meredith has always boasted himself proof against the power of woman's influence; he has succumbed at last. Oh, beauty! thou art a wonderful gift—a wonderful and a precious inheritance. I am thankful that I was born beautiful!"

So might fair Cleopatra have exulted on the reedy shores of the Nile; so might Helen of Troy have smiled on the ruin she had wrought!

And when she returned to her room she was so radiant that Mrs. Trevor looked up from her novel in surprise.

"Why, Julia, what has brightened you up so?"

"Nothing, only I am tired, mamma. I think I'll lie down and sleep awhile."

It was late in the afternoon when Miss Trevor came out again, with her lace parasol and fluttering *berige* scarf, and strolled slowly down along the beach path.

"Julia, where are you going? Can I go too?"

"Yes—come. I am only going to take a little walk along the shore to watch the tides."

Bessie Payne came running up like a child. She was a child, although eighteen blooming summers had left their sunshine in her brown locks, their starlight in the blue depths of her soft, innocent eyes. Bessie was like a kitten, or a white rabbit, or a dove, or any other soft, winning little thing whom you pet and care for almost unconsciously. Julia Trevor was not one whose affections showed themselves very readily, yet even she was fond of Bessie Payne.

"Oh, Julia, did you see Mr. Meredith and Colonel Tracey go out in the yacht two hours ago?"

"No."

"How splendidly the little Sea Gull spread her white wings to the breeze! Oh I wish they had asked me to go too!"

"We shall enjoy our walk quite as well, Bessie."

"Do you think so? But I would so like a sail."

"Then, Bessie, you shall have it—or a row, which is quite as good. Here are two little boats fastened to the shore, with oars inside. I used to be a capital oarswoman, and I don't think I have forgotten all my skill yet."

She stooped and unloosened the rope moorings.

"Jump in!"

"But are you not afraid, Julia?"

"Afraid!" Miss Trevor laughed scornfully. "In an hour I'll bring you back, my little Bessie. There—just in the middle of the seat—that's right. Now we are off!"

Like a floating leaf the little boat glided away over the clear tides, propelled by the swift, regular strokes of Miss Trevor's oars, while Bessie sat, holding on to the seat, her cheery lips apart and her blue eyes dilated, half with delight, half with terror.

"Don't you like it, little one?"

"Oh! I like it so much! How glorious the breeze is! and just look at the sunset on the water, like a great line of gold; and those purple-edged clouds piled up against the horizon—it is like a picture, Julia."

It was like a picture; nor were the two fair girls in the tiny boat the least beautiful feature of it. The fresh salt wind had loosened Julia's hair and given new bloom to her cheeks, while her eyes sparkled like jewels, and the unconsciously graceful pose of her long throat and slender shoulders would have attracted the artistic eye of a sculptor.

So the little boat shot merrily onwards, the rush of the tide, and the measured dip of the oars combining to speed its course, while, afar off, the edges of the purple clouds glowed with golden outlines, as if some glittering pen would fain shape the word "Beware" upon the storm-charged piles.

And Julia and Bessie, all unconscious of the impending danger, drifted onwards!

"We are out of sight of land, Julia; don't you think we ought to return? See how rough the water is getting, and the West is all black and gloomy."

"Julia, please turn back!"

"In a moment, Bess."

She headed the boat round, but, as she did so, one of the oars, slipping against the wet edge, escaped from her hold, and dropped into the water, shooting away on the swift tides like a human thing instinct with mischief.

"Oh, Julia! what shall we do?"

"We shall do very well, Bessie. I have rowed with one oar before now, and I can do it again."

But Julia remembered with an inward misgiving that she had rowed with one oar only on a clear little wooded stream, with low branches touching the water on either side—not on the sea, with no land in sight, a heavy wind-gust rising in the West,

and the tide pushing out to sea like a flight of mad demons.

"Be careful, Julia, there is a dangerous ledge of rocks here somewhere—I have heard my father speak of it."

"I shall be careful, Bessie."

But she felt her heart die within her as she became conscious how fast her strength was failing. Could Bessie have seen the colour fade from her cheeks, the wild, strained look come into her eye, she would have been more terrified than ever.

And, all of a sudden, she threw the one dripping ear into the boat, and clasped Bessie Payne to her heart, with a low, moaning cry.

"Bessie, Bessie, I can row no farther! Oh, my little one, have I brought you here to die? Must we both perish, with no one to aid us?"

And the rush of the tide and the shriek of the rising wind echoed her words.

"The rocks! the rocks!" wailed Bessie, who was straining her eyes through the unnatural gloom of sea and sky.

And, at the same moment, the little boat struck against the hidden reef with a groaning crash.

"Darker than ever. We are going to have a terrible blow," muttered Colonel Tracey, between his set teeth. "Are you sure the Sea-Gull is good for it, Meredith?"

"The Sea-Gull has weathered worse gusts than this," returned Meredith, calmly. "Be easy in your mind, Tracey."

"Is your sailing-master up to the emergency?"

"Quite so."

Tracey leaned on the bulwarks, looking at the rolling tides below.

"Ha, there comes an empty boat drifting along, with an ugly hole in her side, and—what's that? A handkerchief, caught in the split boards. Something has happened somewhere!"

His speech was hardly uttered when Alban had swung himself over the yacht's side, surveyed the boat, which was floating along on her side, and possessed himself of the brine-drenched pocket-handkerchief.

"Merciful heavens! it is Julia Trevor's!"

One instant he stood looking down on the mute, unconscious signal of distress, then he went forward to the sailing-master.

"I tell ye what, Mr. Meredith," said the old tar, slowly turning the handkerchief round and round in his hand, "that boat got stove in on Raimond's Reef."

"How far is it?"

"About a mile to the west, sir."

"Then head her for Raimond's Reef."

"It's a dangerous place, sir."

"I don't care if it were the entrance to the Styx!"

"All right, sir."

Once or twice Colonel Tracey spoke to Mr. Meredith, but received no answer.

Alban was standing with folded arms looking down at the surging tides.

"My heaven! how slowly we move!" he muttered at last. "Well—there is a fate which we can none of us escape, following us with perpetual footsteps, and in the storm and tempest of this twilight is hidden my fate!"

Four hours afterwards Julia Trevor awoke to consciousness in her own room at the sea-side hotel, opening her eyes upon shaded lights, and hearing with confused consciousness the sound of hushed voices and suppressed whispers.

And at the same time she felt sharp pangs in her head, chest and arm.

"Oh, mamma, am I dying? Did those cruel waves and sharp rocks beat the life out of me? How came I here? Where is Bessie?"

"My dear, you are not to talk," interposed Mrs. Trevor, with wet eyes and faltering voice. "Mr. Meredith brought you down in his yacht; he found you thrown on the rocks at Raimond's Reef, insensible. Ten minutes later the tide would have swept you away—oh, love, it makes my heart almost cease to beat to think of it!"

"Mr. Meredith," she repeated, slowly, as if trying to remember. "And Bessie?"

"Bessie is in the next room, dear."

"How is she?"

"She is asleep."

Alas! they dared not tell Julia that the little innocent thing was indeed asleep—asleep with white roses around her pillow, and peaceful folded hands, never to wake again.

Julia put her hand up to the wet bandages on her face.

"Mamma, what are these for?"

"Darling, your face—it is cut."

Julia drew a low, sobbing sigh. Why had she not perished on the lonely twilight rocks, rather than to live on, despoiled of her rich heritage of beauty?

What a lesson to Julia was the next month, passed in the silence of her own room, with Pain, Sleeplessness and Remorse for her companions! For it was just one month afterwards that she came down to the parlour, her glorious auburn hair shorn away, the roses vanished from her cheeks, and a deep, red-seamed scar reaching from temple to lip on the left cheek. Mr. Meredith rose to escort her to the sofa, for her gait was yet faltering and her motions uncertain.

"Alban—you have not yet gone to New Zealand?" she said, with a sudden flush rising to her poor pale brow.

"Did you think I should go while you were so ill, Julia?"

"It is kind of you," she murmured, faintly—"so much kinder than I have deserved. But you will go now, will you not?"

"Not unless you send me?"

"I?"

"If you bid me stay, Julia—if you will let me remain as your husband—there will be no more question as to my going to New Zealand," he said, calmly.

"But, Alban, I am wasted and weak, with a hideous scarred face and a shattered constitution, and—"

He came close to her and took her thin hand in his, with a tenderness that lighted up his whole face.

"No—you are, my Julia, as beautiful as ever in my eyes. It was you I loved, not the roses nor the golden hair. My sweet wife, I can read my destiny in your eyes; I shall not go to New Zealand."

Nor did he. They were married in the little sea-side church, and their wedding tour was a walk to the quiet churchyard where the white roses were sprinkling their perfumed leaves over Bessie Payne's grave!

A. R.

THE EXECUTION OF MAXIMILIAN.

VARIOUS accounts, more or less apocryphal, of the execution of the Emperor Maximilian have been published, but the following is the most authentic and circumstantial that has yet appeared. It is compiled from the testimony of Tudos, the Emperor's faithful Hungarian body-servant, who was an eye-witness of the scene, and is corroborated by the priest who attended Maximilian, and the officer in command at the door of the prison:

At 7 o'clock A.M., on the 19th of June, His Majesty left the room where he had been confined in the convent of the Capuchinas, accompanied by two priests (poor Mexican canonici of Queretaro), a sergeant, and the guard. Three carriages awaited the prisoners. His Majesty, with the two priests, got into the first, Miramon and Mejia into the two others. The Emperor was very pale, but calm. The procession was headed by thirty riflemen; then came the three carriages, followed by fifteen tiradores, four battalions of infantry, and two squadrons of cavalry. They marched slowly to the Cerro de la Campana—the spot at which His Majesty had surrendered on the 15th of May. On the road people publicly displayed their sympathy and indignation. No men of the upper classes showed themselves. The crowd was composed chiefly of poor Indians and of ladies who followed the carriage, fearlessly manifesting their sympathy. The Emperor acknowledged these demonstrations by bowing on either side, as was his usual custom.

When they arrived at the foot of the "cerro" the carriage stood still, and as the door would not open the Emperor had to get out through the window into the arms of his servant Tudos. His Majesty said to him, "Do you really think that they are going to kill me this time?" Tudos answered, "No; I cannot believe it, even yet." The Emperor then had to walk about a hundred paces up the hill, to where the powder magazine had been during the siege. The officer in command of the execution was General Diaz (not Porfirio Diaz); the captain who commanded the firing party was Don Simon Montemayor. For each of the prisoners there had been detailed four soldiers, and one man in reserve; they were placed at five paces distant from the three prisoners, the latter standing three paces from one another. They were not arranged by the officials, but took their places by chance, the Emperor being on the right, Miramon in the middle, and Mejia on the left, facing Queretaro.

When all was ready His Majesty took off his hat and gave it to Tudos, telling him to convey it to his father as the last he had ever worn; he wiped his face with his handkerchief, as the day was very hot, and gave that also to his servant, with a request that it might be given to the Empress, if alive, if not, to his mother. Behind the prisoners, higher up on the hill, stood the people, nearly all poor Indians. His Majesty gave to each of the four soldiers who were

to fire at him an ounce of gold (3*l.* 4*s.*), and told them to aim well, and not shoot at his head, and then, turning to those who stood around, spoke in Spanish, "Perdono á todos, y pido que todos me perdonen. Desco que la sangre mia, que se va á derramar, sea para el bien de este pais. Viva Méjico! Viva la Yndependencia!" His Majesty then placed his hand upon his breast, to show the soldiers where to fire, and opened his arms to receive the shots. The signal was given, and the four men fired. The Emperor looked upwards, and fell slowly, in a sitting position. He was struck by all four balls, by three in the lower part of his waistcoat on the left side and by one high up on the right. He moved his eyes and arm, and looked towards Tudos, who had been standing only three paces from him, as if he wished to speak, but he was not able to articulate. One of the priests sprinkled him with holy water. The man held in reserve then came up and gave him the fifth ball, but it only went through the lungs on the right side. The muzzle of the gun was so close that the waistcoat took fire, and Tudos had to pour water on it to put out the flame.

The Emperor in his agony pulled at his waistcoat, as if to open it, and tore it at the fifth button-hole from the bottom. He continued moving, so another soldier was brought up, but his rifle missed fire. General Diaz came up on horseback and told them to make haste and finish; again a soldier came up and pulled, and again did the piece miss fire. There were no more men ready with their arms loaded, and some moments were lost in finding one; at last one was brought who stepped up close and fired, and this time the shot went through the Emperor's heart, and put an end to his sufferings; he gave a convulsive start, gasped, and fell backward. His dress had again caught fire, and Tudos had to extinguish it with water. The Emperor must have lived about two minutes after he received the first fire. Four carriages then brought a rough kind of coffin too short for the body, which was pushed in with the legs hanging over the edge, and in that manner it was carried back to Queretaro, unaccompanied by any officials; it was followed, however, by a great number of poor Indians, weeping loudly. Every drop of blood which fell on the ground was quickly wiped up by the handkerchiefs of these poor people.

Mejia did not die till after the Emperor; it took seven balls to kill him. Miramon was the only one of the three who died immediately. All three were fired at in the same moment. It was His Majesty's particular wish that, in case they were condemned, they should all be executed together.

The *German Gazette* of Leipzig publishes the following letter, addressed by the Emperor Maximilian, shortly before his death, to the Austrian Ambassador at Mexico:

"Queretaro, Prison of Las Capuchinas,
June 17, 1867.

"DEAR BARON LAGO,—I have finished with this world. My last desires now concern only my mortal remains, which will soon be freed from the sufferings of those who shall survive me. My medical adviser, Dr. Basch, will have my body conveyed to Vera Cruz. It will only be accompanied by two domestics, Gull and Tudos. I have ordered that no pomp or solemn ceremony shall take place on its removal to that port, nor on board the ship which is to take my body to Europe. I have looked at death with tranquillity, and I wish also to enjoy calm in my coffin. You will procure, my dear baron, a passage for Dr. Basch with my two servants, who are charged with the care of my body, on board of one of the two ships of war, by which it will be conveyed to Europe. There I wish to be buried by the side of my poor wife. If the news of her decease is not true, let my body be deposited in some place until the Empress shall be again united to me by death. Please to give the necessary orders to Captain de Greller. Let also the widow of my faithful companion-in-arms, Miramon, be conveyed to Europe by one of the same ships of war. I reckon especially on the fulfilment of this wish as she has been charged by me to join my mother at Vienna. I thank you once more for all the trouble I have given you, and remain, yours very kindly, MAXIMILIAN."

THE AFFECTIONS.—There is a famous passage in the writings of Rousseau, the great delineator of the human heart, which is as true to human nature as it is beautiful in expression: "Were I in a desert I would find out wherewith in it to call forth my affections. If I could do no better, I would fasten them on some sweet myrtle, or some melancholy cypress, to connect myself to; I would court them for their shade, and greet them kindly for their protection. I would write my name upon them and declare that they were the sweetest trees throughout all the desert. If their leaves withered I would teach myself to mourn, and when they rejoiced I

would rejoice along with them." Such is the absolute necessity which exists in the human heart of having something to love. Unless the affections have an object, life itself becomes joyless and insipid. The affections have this peculiarity, that they are not so much the means of happiness as their exercise is happiness itself. And not only so, if they have no object, the happiness derived from our other powers is cut off.

THE SULTAN'S PRESENT TO HER MAJESTY.—The Sultan has sent seven splendid Arab horses as a present to Her Majesty. The horses brought over in charge of Mouraffen Bey, are now in the royal stables, Buckingham Palace. In addition to these, two others were sent for the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Beaufort.

NATHALIE LERMOND.

CHAPTER III.

ON rolled the carriage over that dreary road again, and the wind, like a doomed spirit, moaned among the sand hills, and after it the sea called, and the rain beat down upon all in blinding sheets; but through the noise of wind, rain, and waters, steadily behind it followed the hollow tramp, tramp of that horseman.

At the iron gate guarding the entrance to Miss Lermund's dominions he advanced to say good-night.

She heard the deep panting of the horse, and even his own hard breathing, as he leaned towards her from the saddle.

"Farewell, Miss Lermund," said he, courteously, "but let me trust that we shall meet again."

"Indeed, sir—"

He interrupted:

"Yonder old hall was once my home also. You will allow me to visit it sometimes for the sake of old associations. I dare not ask more."

One last look from his bold, admiring eyes, full of subtle and intense power, then he had turned his horse's head and was dashing off down the wild and storm-swept road.

Miss Ruby Hendee, beginning to tire of a very still vigil in the oriel window, stood in the lighted hall, very petite, very pretty, and very gracious, and welcomed Miss Lermund—that is, in true school-girl fashion.

She gave a little cry of delight, and, springing forward, threw her jewelled arms around the tall, willow figure in advance of Marie and the house-keeper, kissing her rapturously through her veil.

"Oh, Miss Lermund, I am very glad to bid you welcome home—indeed I am!"

And women's hearts being much the same the wide world over, the young heiress returned the embrace and the kiss, more gently perhaps, but quite as sincerely, and, thanking her dear Miss Hendee, retired immediately to her own room.

All this, of course, was as it should be. So Ruby stood on the hearth, cooling her impatience and undergoing some mental calculations regarding the length of time required by Marie to dress her lady's hair and divest her of the dust of travel, when at that moment there came a rustle of silk from the hall, a tapping of high-heeled slippers, and Mrs. Roberts, disturbed by the sight which followed, hastened to order in the tea.

Women, as critics of each other's attractions, are invariably merciless. Men, absorbed in a general effect, may sometimes overlook the minor imperfections; but we of the other sex—never!

While Miss Lermund unfolded her napkin, quietly unconscious, in the warm and mellow light of the room, little demure Ruby from under her sleek, blonde lashes was covertly trying her by this thorough ordeal, as one pretty woman will another, you know.

It was a figure tall and willowy, bearing itself like a princess born and bred. There must have been blue blood somewhere in the old Lermund stock. Her head was small and classic—the hair combed smoothly back and knotted on the white neck—silkly bright hair, and black, except when the light touched it—then it was bronze. She had a purely oval face, the skin creamy-white, the eyes almond-shaped and berry-brown, with black lashes that curled at the tips. How red and calm her mouth was—just like a child's awakened from sleep. What a pretty white hand she had, and finely moulded arms!

"Oh, Mrs. Roberts," thought Ruby, sipping her tea, "you tell of that dead and buried enchantress that lived here ten years ago. Now I do not believe she was half as lovely as this new one."

Mrs. Roberts was absorbed in a different subject. "The hall has been closed ten years, Miss Lermund," she was saying, "ever since so much trouble

came upon us and Mr. Hendee died. It stands in need of some repairs. Not knowing what your will was about such things, and not receiving any orders either, we couldn't act till you came."

Miss Lermund's eyes took in the length and breadth of the panelled room.

"I will make all necessary arrangements at once," she said. "Ten years is a long time to exclude the air and sunshine. Did Mr. Hendee leave no relatives—no connexions here?"

"I am the last of the name," answered Ruby. "Mr. Hendee's step-brother resides at the Fields—a Mr. St. Maur; but—they were estranged."

"He has a host of gay people from London. It will be like the old days again," said Mrs. Roberts, sighing.

"Now days are better than old ones," said Ruby, toying with her napkin-ring. "Mrs. Roberts, please pass the muffins."

Mrs. Roberts obeyed, and so, amidst the discussion of jellies and cake, and a succession of little dialogues, Miss Lermund herself duly admired, and the Louis Quatorze clock kept chiming the while from the mantel-piece; and by and by Barbara came in—and removed the tea-things, and Miss Lermund, nestled down in an easy-chair, watched the cheery wood-fire, and listened dreamily to Ruby's piano, with her face half in shadow, half in light, and the silky hair put carelessly back from it with one jewelled hand.

Mrs. Roberts sat and watched her, rubbing her eyes, as if it were some uncertain vision that she saw. Presently Ruby rose up, and, putting away her music, closed the piano.

"Good night," said Miss Lermund, rising also.

"Good night," answered Mrs. Roberts, gazing at her wistfully; "lock your door, Miss Lermund."

Marie had already been dismissed. Nathalie put down the lamp, and looked around her chamber. Before tea she had barely noticed it; now, more curious, her eyes took in all its little details with womanly exactness.

It was a small, handsome room, with a small glass door opening upon the balcony, and protected by another door of lattice-work. The walls were of oak, with handsome mouldings.

A carpet of thick velvet covered the floor. Every article of furniture—the quaint, claw-footed chairs, the low couches, were of the same highly polished wood.

The bed had pillows covered with lace, with embroidered curtains and counterpanes of pale amber satin; the chairs were covered with like material—the couches piled with luxurious cushions, tasselled heavily with gold.

There were two arched windows, hung with the prevailing amber of the room, and on the broad dark ledge of one lay a guitar, beautifully inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and with a broad band of white ribbon, discoloured now by time and dust, hanging from it still.

Midway betwixt these windows a recess had been hollowed in the wall, and there, on a low pedestal of solid, glistening ebony, stood, like an incense-cup, a slender, sculptured Tuscan urn of the whitest marble, with a fringe of golden lilies drooping over its edge, and filling the room with perfume.

Nathalie stood before the toilet-table, and looked around her wonderingly.

Was this the retreat of some voluptuous Sybarite, or the bower of an Eastern sultana? Surely Miss Hendee's pretty blonde head had never planned this—neither had the staid, practical housekeeper, she was prepared for surprises at Hendee Hall. Loosing her heavy hair at the great oval mirror, she began brushing out its shining black lengths preparatory for the night, and playing with them dreamily with her jewelled fingers.

Sundry little knickknacks scattered upon the table straightway arrested her attention. A casket of jewels lay beneath the glass, with some initials in tarnished gold on the cover.

Miss Lermund bent to read "H. St. M." Thrown carelessly beside it lay a fan of frosted silver and sandal-wood—an exquisite toy—and a book of poems, bound in gold and Russia leather and pencilled faintly through all its creamy leaves.

On the fly-leaf those same initials were marked again. Nathalie touched them with a sensitive thrill. Surely this had once been the chamber of some bright and beautiful woman.

A tap came at the door.

"May I come in, Miss Lermund?" said a gentle voice.

"Yes," answered Nathalie.

Ruby Hendee's golden curls and blue eyes formed a lovely picture on the threshold.

"Do you like it?" she said, under her breath, and scanning the place with a slightly scared look.

"Why should I not?" replied Nathalie; "it is beautiful."

Ruby threw herself into a seat with a long breath. She was in a white dressing-gown, with the golden hair all tucked away behind the pink-tipped ears, her spotless arms shining like marble in their loose sleeves, and a half-awed, half-wondering look in her sweet blushing face.

"Oh, yes! but we cannot help being foolish sometimes regarding such matters. I hope you will pull this dreary old rookery down, Miss Lermund, and build a villa, like Mr. St. Maur's at the Fields."

Nathalie laughed a little as she looped up the last coil of her splendid hair.

"What evil can there be in this black and gold room, Miss Hendee?"

Ruby's voice fell.

"Will you promise not to be frightened?"

"If it be not too dreadful a story."

"Well then this chamber was hers, Miss Lermund—Hagar St. Maur who was—shunning the uglier word—"killed so strangely ten years ago."

Nathalie leaned against the table, ill and faint. Not that she was over timid or superstitious; nor that there is the least power in associations. Her room! That casket hers! That pretty perfumed fan, the book of poems, the guitar, hers also! She had touched them all a thousand times with her dead white hands.

"No one has ever used it since she died," said Ruby; "but it is the handsomest room in the house, and Mrs. Roberts has swept and decorated it for you, I see, not even forgetting the yellow lilies that she always kept in that urn. Oh, Miss Lermund, you are frightened! You are white as a ghost—let me call Mrs. Roberts—she will give you another chamber."

"No, no!" cried Nathalie, rallying, and half ashamed of her momentary emotion. "I am not afraid, indeed I am not! but it was such a dreadful thing. Do you know the story, Miss Hendee?"

Ruby opened her violet eyes.

"It is known to every man, woman and child for miles around."

"I never heard it," said Miss Lermund.

"Is it possible?"

"Not the whole of it."

Ruby shrugged her lovely shoulders.

"You would never sleep in this room were I to tell it to you."

Miss Lermund unclasped her bracelets, and laid them quietly on the toilet-table.

"Would I not? However, you shall tell me the story, and I will sleep in this room."

Ruby stared.

"Are you in earnest?"

"Thoroughly."

"Well," said Ruby, leaning back into the depths of the luxurious chair, "I don't know why I should object. As the last representative of the house of Hendee, I can pledge you that my version of the tragedy is, at least, correct."

Miss Lermund had drawn up a seat to the table and was sitting opposite her now, very still and grave, with her head upon her hand, and her brown eyes gazing into her companion's pretty blonde face. Ruby glanced nervously round the room, and, seeing nothing there but the handsome decorations and the bright lamp-light, began with more assurance:

"Once upon a time, as the fairy stories say, there died in this old house a certain Mr. Hendee, who left behind him a lovely widow, scarcely passed her girlhood, and an infant son, Robert, sole heir to his estates. That the young beauty bore her loss with fortitude may be safely conjectured, since, before a year had elapsed, there came another lover, for whom she dropped her widow's weeds."

"He was a West Indian trader, a man of reputed wealth, who took up his abode here directly after his marriage with Mrs. Hendee; and here, in due time, another son was born. From earliest childhood it seems that the half-brothers never agreed; and, certain it is that, as they grew older, they detested each other so cordially, and kept the hall in such a continual uproar, that there was no living with them; so Robert was sent away to school in one direction, and Gilbert in another."

"About this time there died in the West Indies a relative of Mr. St. Maur's, who, when dying, left to his care a daughter, a little child but a few years old. In her infancy, at her birth itself, for all that I know, this daughter had been betrothed to Gilbert. After her father's death she was sent for by Mr. St. Maur, and in due time arrived at the hall—a lovely little creature. There is a picture of her still in the east gallery—you will see it to-morrow—a charming child's face, with short red lips, and great Spanish eyes, looking out through showers of golden curls."

"Well, little Hagar grew and thrived wonderfully. She was the heiress, you must know, of half a million, or more—a fact, let us hope, which did not influence Mr. St. Maur in betrothing her to his son. She was a passionate, warm-hearted, wilful little thing,

and her beauty was truly wonderful. With Gilbert she was for ever at variance. Their quarrels and wrangling were, even then, the talk of the family servants. But Robert, the elder brother, was her champion, her playmate, her friend. One might have seen, even then, what the result would be.

"Time went on, and little Hagar grew too tall to romp on the shore with Robert, and so they sent her away to school. The two brothers were now verging on manhood, but, unfortunately, the ill-feeling between them had been religiously nursed meantime, and was not likely to improve with their increasing years. Robert went abroad, Gilbert grew wild, dissipated, and broke; his mother's heart, and spent his father's money, so the story goes, and both father and mother, before Robert came back, were laid side by side in the pretty church that you can see from these windows, a half mile distant, across the fields.

"In due time it came to pass that there returned to this roof a woman, versed in all womanly accomplishments, more seductive than Cleopatra, more lovely than Helen of old, with her dark eyes and wonderful golden hair—one for whom worlds might be lost; one who walked these galleries and terraces—they miss her still, I fancy!—leading men's hearts by a single yellow hair. Those were happy days for the Hall! Followers enough the beautiful lady had, and she danced, flirted, and quarrelled with Gilbert, the same as of old; and all this time he, embarrassed with debt, and darkly jealous, was pressing her to name an early wedding-day."

Ruby paused, with a deep-drawn breath. Miss Lermond's face, shaded by one white hand from sight, still held its intense and earnest look. She made a slight gesture.

"Shall I go on?" said Ruby.

"Yes."

"Well, Miss Hagar answered Gilbert neither yes nor nay. She suffered him to follow his own way about the matter, and so, in the midst of bridal preparations and great rejoicings generally, Robert came home from abroad.

"That was an evil day. Robert Hendee's heart was human. He saw Hagar, the betrothed wife of his brother, and loved her madly. While all was being made ready, while Gilbert was purchasing and fitting up from Hagar's wealth the neighbouring estate of the Fields, intending to make it a permanent residence, the woman of whose hand and fortune he felt so sure was walking with Robert in the moonlight of soft summer nights, sailing with him across the clear, calm bay, and singing old love songs for his ear only, when no other was near. Worse yet, she was loving him with all her wild, passionate heart.

"When or how the truth of the matter first dawned upon Gilbert tradition saith not; but there was a scene full of towering wrath, taunts, reproaches, and threats, and at its end Hagar grew stately, calm, and pale; Robert kissed her lovely hand, and went away, after which Gilbert hovered near, like one afraid of his treasure, and watched her with eyes that never slept.

"The wedding-day dawned at last, and nothing had been seen of the obnoxious Robert. There was never such a bride before; never was there one so bright and beautiful, but withal so very calm. For one moment Mr. St. Maur's vigil about her had never relaxed; and so the bridal hour drew on, she entered the carriage, and was driven to that little church that I told you of, and the church aisles were strewn with roses, and there they were married.

"Magnificent was the wedding feast, the lights, the music, and the dancing thereof. And the bride opened the ball with a gay young baron who was present, laughed, sang, and bewildered all who saw her with a beauty which, that night, men said was more than mortal.

"It was somewhere near midnight when she was missed from the room. Uneasiness followed, then terror, then search; and then—down on the beach, whither they traced her by her slender footprints—at an old trysting-place along the crags, where the servants afterwards swore she had often met Robert, they found the earth trodden, and stained with pools of fresh blood. Further search served to discover more positive proofs of a foul and terrible murder. And oh, saddest of all! they found a cluster of golden curls, all tangled and blood-spattered; and, flung over the crag at their rocky base, was a dagger of Robert Hendee's, stained with her blood. For the rest, the sea had it.

"A horse was discovered, fastened in a thicket, half a mile away, and proved to be the property of Robert. He himself was walking the beach calmly, close by the scene of the murder, and when arrested offered no resistance, but denied all knowledge of the dreadful deed, and protested his innocence. That he was there to meet the doomed girl he admitted, but not his purpose in so doing. Those who knew him

best knew that it was an elopement—knew too that Hagar had never meant to marry Mr. St. Maur. But Gilbert would believe nothing—heard nothing but his brother's guilt; and the secrets of that other heart must rest for ever with the sea in which it lies buried."

Ruby's voice had sunk to a whisper. All the colour was gone from her sweet blonde face.

"And was the body never found?" said the low, awed voice of Miss Lermond.

"Never! It had been thrown over the crag and carried away by the tide. You know how Robert Hendee died in prison; but there is only one in the world, I think, who to this day believes him guilty of the murder, and he is—"

"Who?" asked Nathalie.

"Mr. St. Maur."

Miss Lermond drew her breath painfully.

"Much of Hagar's wealth fell into his hands," Ruby continued; "there were other claimants, but he was fortunate enough to secure a legal adviser—Calvert, I believe was his name—whose perseverance overcame all difficulties; he came from London, a great lawyer, very talented, and very rich, though report says, years ago, when such things were frequent, he once occupied a debtor's cell in a common jail."

Miss Lermond raised her head slowly from her hand. A faint crimson flush was creeping into the oval cheek.

"John Calvert?" she said, involuntarily.

"Yes," said Ruby, innocently; "that is the name. Do you know him?"

If she had known what was passing in the young heiress's mind that moment, how she was seeing again—dimly, it is true, for the veil through which she saw was made up and darkened by many a past year—a corridor, with faint gleams of light falling here and there, and a tall figure pacing it, with firm, metallic tread.

"I knew him once, long ago," she answered Ruby.

"It is said," continued Ruby, "that Mr. St. Maur was greatly vexed about the will. He was wise enough to submit, however, to his share of the inheritance—a curse! Well, it is a sad story, is it not? You must know these Hendees were always an unlucky race. I am of a remote branch, and but a visitor here, you know."

"And this Mr. St. Maur—" began Miss Lermond. "Oh, I never saw him but once, when I was a child. He was a handsome man then, with dark eyes and hair. But it is twelve o'clock!"

She rose up to kiss Miss Lermond good night, her fair face wearing a less frightened look, since she had told the story so bravely. They were standing side by side before the great mirror, and she turned Nathalie round, and looked in it.

"You are so pretty," she said, like a child, "and I love all beautiful things."

Miss Lermond kissed the white forehead gravely. "Are you sure," said Ruby, with her hand on the door, "that you are not afraid to sleep here now?"

"Quite sure," answered Nathalie.

"Because I can call Mrs. Roberts."

"Not for the world!"

Ruby looked back with soft, troubled eyes.

"Then good night."

"Good night."

With a dull, sullen sound the door shut after her. Nathalie stood gazing into the mirror, ashamed of the pale face that it reflected. She would have given half her fortune at that moment to have forgotten Ruby's story. Presently there came a revulsion of feeling.

"Am I cowardly or superstitious?" she said, shaking off a creeping chill, and turning resolutely from the glass. "It is too late, at least, to stand here longer thinking of Hagar St. Maur."

The curtains of the two arched windows had been looped away. Nathalie suffered them to remain so. The storm outside was ceasing, but a wild sea-wind blew across the casements and through the tall pines beyond, with a moaning, fitful sound. Above that rose up the dull, distant roar of the tireless sea. In the shadow of the amber satin bed-hanging Nathalie lay and listened, expectant of she knew not what; but as nothing came, lulled at last into a dreamy sense of rest and forgetfulness, her white eyelids shut gradually down, and Nathalie slept. How long she never knew. Neither could she ever tell what aroused her—whether it was a subtle instinct of danger, true even in sleep, or some sound within the chamber. The moon had broken from the clouds, and was shining brightly into the room—she remembered long after how the pallid light streamed through the opening of the curtains, and lay upon the floor in long, arrow-shaped gleams. She started wildly up.

The glass door opening upon the balcony, as also the one of lattice-work, stood wide open. The wind

was blowing coldly in and the lamp still burned upon the toilet-table.

Nothing more about the room was changed but the draperies of the bed, which she had drawn about her before going to sleep.

These were now fastened or held back, and, standing in the opening thus made, clearly defined in the full moonlight, she saw the figure of a woman.

Great heaven! was she sleeping or waking? Was it truth or fancy—a dream, or a nightmare of troubled slumbers? or had the grave indeed given up its dead?

It was a pale and misty shape, clothed in some light garment, which clung about it in drenched and dripping folds.

From the low, waxen forehead, far below the slender waist, streamed down a cloud of long, wet, golden hair, wrapping all the faint outlines as if in a cloud.

Her head was inclined to one side, so that the face stood half in shadow, and half in light, gazing on Nathalie; and a face so wan and woeful, so terrible in its look of blank and hopeless love, but withal so full of strange, unearthly beauty, human vision had never surely seen before. The curved lips were half parted in a wonderful smile. Her eyes looked straight into Nathalie's, black, and almond-shaped, and shining like living coals of fire. One pale, slender hand hung at her side, the other was pressing back that yellow torrent of wet and streaming hair. So voiceless and motionless stood this white, midnight phantom, within the satin bed-hangings, confronting the heiress of Hendee Hall.

Taking in these details, one by one, with those dreadful eyes fixed upon her, Nathalie, one long, never-to-be-forgotten moment, saw and lived; then the chamber and the pale, mocking moonlight, the ghastly falling lamp, and that wild, woeful face reeled and swam before her sight; there was a slow curdling of icy blood in every vein, and with a shriek that rang through every room in the house, so full it was of agonized terror, she flung up her white arms, and fell back, still and senseless, upon the pillows!

CHAPTER IV.

At full length on a low couch in the morning sunlight, Gilbert St. Maur lay with the amber mouth-piece of a superb Turkish pipe between his lips, lazily watching by turns the clouds of perfumed smoke curling up therefrom, and teasing a sleek, long-nosed greyhound that was stretched on a Persian rug at his side, gazing at his master with large, wistful eyes.

Pierre, his spruce French valet, had brought in breakfast half an hour before; but it still remained untasted on the round table by Mr. St. Maur's elbow—light wine and fragrant coffee, rolls and muffins of the most tempting kind; an omelette, whose making Pierre himself had superintended, and the delicate brown breast of a chicken, from all of which the master of the Fields had turned away, tossing choice bits now and then to Castor, the hound, but otherwise evidently above the seductions of the inner man.

He lay, as I have said, at full length on the couch, his handsome head thrown back, a smoking-cap with a gilt tassel placed on his dark curls, and his tall figure wrapped in a dressing-gown of black velvet, lined with crimson silk. His face was dark and clearly defined; the lips thin, like a scarlet thread under the drooping moustache; the eyes black and relentless—but handsome, as some dangerous serpents are. Beside him the door stood half open, through which one could see the long avenue of silver-leaved poplars, a lawn like emerald velvet, and a gay parterre, full of gorgeous, rainbow flowers, glittering with the last night's rain; and on the stone balustrade a tall peacock, spreading his plumes in the morning sun.

Mr. St. Maur lay a long time, filling the sumptuous dressing-room with smoke and subtle aromas, and looking silently down the poplar avenue, with the eager look of one whose inward sight is fixed on far different objects. Of what was he thinking that he gazed so steadily? The sleek greyhound, growing tired at last of the silence, and the non-renewal of the tit-bits from the table, rose up from the rug and whinily thrust his nose into his master's hand.

"Down, Castor!" said Mr. St. Maur, starting impatiently; "where is Calvert, I wonder? It must be past his breakfast hour."

The spell, whatever it had been, was broken. He rose up and, dashing off his smoking-cap, crossed the room to a small cabinet, and, unlocking a drawer therein, took from it a bundle of papers. He stood glancing over them with a perplexed and gloomy face, when a quick, firm step echoed along the stone balustrade outside, and someone came to the half-open door, whistling an air from "Norma," and call-

ing to the peacock, who crested his slender head and spread his plumes in answer, but stirred not from his perch.

"Think of angels, &c., and they are sure to be near," said Mr. St. Maur, aloud. "*Bon jour, my boy.*"

Tall and stately, with a head whose keen gray eyes gave you the impression of never sleeping, the gentleman addressed stepped carelessly in.

"I have heard a different version of the old saw," he answered, dryly, stooping to caress the hound, who leaped up to meet him.

It was a happy sign for Mr. John Calvert that all dumb creatures and all little children loved him. Mr. St. Maur thrust his papers back into the cabinet, unlocked it, and turned his handsome, smiling face towards his guest.

"A scene for the Sybarites, is it not? I was never an early riser. It is not polite to stare the sun out of countenance before he has his night-cap off. Pray, where have Miss Galbraith and the dowagers gone to this morning?"

"To pay their court at Hendee Hall," answered Mr. Calvert, shrugging his shoulders. "Look to your laurels, St. Maur. One has arisen in the land mightier than thou."

St. Maur caressed his moustache with careless indifference.

Mr. Calvert tapped on the window-sill.

"I" he answered. "I have no acquaintance with Miss Lermond."

"Rumour says differently," he said, with a merciless smile.

"Then rumour does not know."

Mr. St. Maur took down from a carved stag's head on the wall a gold-mounted riding-whip and a pair of gauntlets.

"You'll excuse me, Calvert, but I think I'll ride over and escort Miss Galbraith and the dowagers back. There is an old housekeeper at the Hall who used to pet me in my guileless days, and a pretty little girl with whom I can claim some sort of relationship—one of the line of Hendee. That is enough to insure me a welcome."

Mr. Calvert smoothed the shining head of the hound resting on his knee.

"Do you remember," he asked, dryly, "Talleyrand's definition of speech?"

Mr. St. Maur gave him a keen look.

"A faculty whereby we conceal our thoughts?"

"Yes," said Mr. John Calvert.

"Oh, you have guessed mine already, I daresay," replied Mr. St. Maur, listlessly. "That Hall was my birthplace—it was also mine by right of inheritance, after the death of the late master. Now, as you have doubtless heard, Miss Lermond is particularly young and pretty—a splendid prey, in fact, for all the fortune-hunters in the country."

"Is she," said Mr. Calvert, oddly smiling, "a woman who wears her heart on her sleeve for daws to peck at?"

Mr. St. Maur was divesting himself of his dressing-gown.

"Not knowing, I cannot say, nor does it matter. Truth to tell, my dear fellow, I intend to deliver Miss Lermond from all such perils, besides disappointing not a few of her followers, by marrying her myself."

Mr. Calvert's eyebrows were raised a little.

"You surprise me," he said.

"Do I? Ah, well! I shall make her quite as good a husband as with her youth and wealth she would be likely to find. Then, too, there was never much love lost between my brother Robert and myself. It will be pleasant, not to say convenient, to become master of Hendee Hall even ten years after his death."

Mr. Calvert raised his searching eyes, and looked at the speaker.

"Miss Galbraith was telling a singular story on the balcony last night. It seems that the Hall, in addition to its other attractions, is haunted ground."

"Haunted?" said Mr. St. Maur, stepping midway to his dressing-case.

"A ghoul—ghost—an apparition has gotten into its closets," said Mr. Calvert.

"Ah, indeed!"

"Miss Lermond was quite indisposed from the effects of a fright received from it on the first night of her arrival."

"Poor Robert!" said Mr. St. Maur, with a sneer; "cannot he rest even yet in his grave?"

Mr. Calvert's brows went up again.

"You mistake. This unearthly visitant has no resemblance to the late master of the Hall," he said.

"Oh—ah? then may I ask who it resembles?"

"Pardon me—a most unfortunate and lamented lady long since deceased, or, more properly speaking, murdered."

Mr. St. Maur started violently.

"Good heaven! what folly are you talking, Calvert?"

"Nothing of which I am myself cognizant, believe me. For farther information I refer you to Miss Galbraith."

"Hang Miss Galbraith!"

"And pray do not let this gossip deter you from making your call!"

Mr. St. Maur looked at him fixedly, with a dark, guilty face; then, withdrawing his gaze, he turned away and walked to the window.

"Here is my horse. I leave you, my dear fellow, to the tender mercies of the Delmare belles and young Felix."

"I have letters to write," said Mr. Calvert.

Mr. St. Maur drew on his gauntlets.

"All my life," he began, "I have been the victim of circumstances. I rebel, but they conquer. Let it go! My name will never appear among the canonized saints. I believe in that Arab mantle for all disasters—Fatality."

They walked across the terrace together, Mr. Calvert with a faint smile upon his lips. Mr. St. Maur's horse, held by a groom, stood at the head of the avenue, tossing his fiery mane, and pawing the gravelled walk impatiently.

"Adieu," said Mr. St. Maur, as he leaped into the saddle. "Calvert, my dear fellow, oblige me by not repeating Miss Galbraith's gossip. It cannot be pleasant to Miss Lermond—it surely is not so to me."

Mr. Calvert looked up in surprise.

Mr. St. Maur's gaze was met by one so calm, and so bafflingly withal, that the man, for once in his life, was disconcerted.

He struck his horse sharply, and dashed off down the avenue, the last words of his gay farewell lost in the clatter of his iron hoofs.

As he passed the gate out into the open highway he turned and looked back. Mr. Calvert still stood as he had left him, leaning against the balustrade, a tall, grave figure, his hands crossed behind him, and the blue smoke of a cigar curling up faintly through his lips.

The hound, Castor, had lain down at his feet.

What there was in the scene to fascinate Mr. St. Maur so long it would be hard to tell.

"Good heaven!" he muttered, beneath his breath, as he started on again, "if I only knew how to read that man."

The morning sunshine, deepening now to noon heat, filled all the narrow winding road. There were summer birds singing in the hedges and orchard slopes; sweet scents of ripe verdure floated out of the woodlands at every breeze. A long, winding strip of starry white sand marked the shore, and beyond it, blue, calm, and beautiful, lay the sea.

Mr. St. Maur took in the scene with cruel, earnest eyes. He was a lover going a-wooing, indeed, and a gay and gallant one; but his thoughts, just then, were not all of love. He looked across the broad green fields, the dark distances of the wood and hills, and rich damp lowlands, the sandy shore—all the Hendee domains—Nathalie Lermond's now. His gloomy face brightened; the hand on his bridle-rein clenched itself fiercely. He turned in his saddle with a low laugh.

"I will baulk him even in his very grave," he said.

It chanced that the low windows of the drawing-room at Hendee Hall looked out upon this strip of road. They were open now to admit the sunlight and the low south wind, heavy with the perfume of roses and jessamine from the terraces. In one of these sat Ruby Hendee, curled up in a chair, her long, golden curls floating about her like a cloud; her face a-droop, like a lily in the sunshine. Ruby's little waxen fingers were lazily meshing some mysterious masses of silk and gold threads scattered over her lap, and Ruby's lovely ears were listening in a careless way to the gay, piquant small-talk and merry laughter floating up from the terraces below, where the honeysuckle vines enriched with clusters of scarlet bloom, and sandal-wood fans waving, attested the presence of more feminine divinity.

"Mr. St. Maur," Mrs. Delmare, one of the dowagers, was saying, "he is the most charming of men. Such a gallant host! He reminds me of Bayard, and the old cavaliers, you know; so different from his friend Mr. Calvert. I cannot tolerate stern men."

"We flirt with Mr. St. Maur," uttered Miss Galbraith's sweet, mocking voice, "and adore Mr. Calvert at his own icy distance—all women do. He is *distingué*—but terrible."

A sudden clatter of horses' hoofs beneath the window started Ruby from her meshing. She raised her white eyelids.

"Lo!" she said, half smiling, "a knight rides down to Camelot!"

Then she heard Mrs. Delmare's voice again:

"Ah, Nathalie, you will be delighted to know him!"

Ruby gathered up her silk and gold hastily.

Too late. A footstep echoed among the roses—a long, black shadow fell across her meshing.

"Pardon me," said a deep, musical voice, "is Miss Lermond—are the ladies from the Fields within?"

He had paused close beside her, the dark master of the Fields—handsome, reckless Mr. St. Maur! his riding-whip in his hand, and his knowing eyes bent in admiring surprise on the lovely, golden-haired vision before him.

He doffed his cap gallantly, as, half frightened, half abashed, she rose up.

"You will find them in the garden below," answered Ruby, blushing divinely under that earnest gaze.

"I have to thank Miss Hendee, I presume? Surely I cannot be mistaken," he said, holding out his hand.

"Sir?" said Ruby, in great perplexity of mind.

He smiled, and with great deference gently took the white hand lying on her chair.

"Miss Hendee—my dear little cousin, do you not know me?"

Her violet eyes looked at him.

"Cousins are we?" she said, arching her brows.

He smiled.

"Are we not?"

"I never knew it."

"As a Hendee, I could not readily mistake your face or name," began Ruby, with dignity. "If you will be seated, I will call Miss Lermond."

"By no means," cried Mr. St. Maur, "there is not—there never can be a welcome for me here. May I ask if you are residing at the Hall?"

Ruby's voice softened.

"No," she answered; "I am but Miss Lermond's guest."

In an opening of the garden vines Rose Galbraith stood, laughing gaily.

"Ah, Mr. St. Maur, seeking whom you may devour, as usual? Don't listen to him, Miss Hendee. I summon him to appear at this tribunal."

"Come," he pleaded, turning his smiling eyes to Ruby, "help me to make my peace with this heiress of yours."

"There will be no need," she said.

"But I have intruded here unbidden."

"Oh, no," answered Mrs. Delmare, from a seat under the honeysuckles; "it was very good of you to ride over for us!"

A faint stir of draperies took place. A figure in a glimmering white dress, with raven hair put back from her face, and a single sprig of honeysuckle set like a tongue of fire in its clusters, rose up from a low garden chair beside Miss Galbraith—it was Nathalie.

What instinct was it, what strange, intuitive perception, which made her shrink and shudder so suddenly, as, for the first time, their hands met? His were like fire, hers like ice. He bent low.

"I am so happy to present you!" Miss Galbraith was saying.

"And I—I beg a thousand pardons," murmured Mr. St. Maur; "impose whatever penance you will upon me, only let it not be banishment."

"Oh, how pretty!" said Miss Galbraith, raising her pencilled brows, as she made room for him beside Mrs. Delmare.

So the first step was gained.

He sat watching the young heiress a long time, making wandering replies the while to all Miss Galbraith's pretty talk. It was a golden moment long dreamed of—for this scheme of Mr. St. Maur's was no new one. To him she said absolutely nothing. She was cold, not uncivil, but simply indifferent. He did not care—he was all the more free to observe her at his leisure; and, thorough man of the world as he was, he reviewed her quietly, with cool, discriminating eyes.

She was handsome—a Greek, antique style of beauty, eminently pleasing to his æsthetic taste—Ruby, standing by her side, looked like a little pale star. She was singularly and unconsciously graceful. A belle, but unspoiled; aristocratic enough by nature to mate with even bluer blood than the St. Maur's—items all of which he duly approved. Perhaps she had broken hearts—very likely—he had heard as much; but she was not cold—no, nor heartless; no heartless woman ever had eyes like hers. Thus far he could see his way clearly.

There was a half-hour's pleasant gossip in the cool drawing-room, wherein little Ruby very strangely found herself talking freely with the dark, dreaded master of the Fields, colouring more than once, also, beneath his bright, admiring gaze; she likewise discovered how very handsome he was, and how closely he watched Miss Lermond, and wondered if all the mysterious stories about him were really true. Ah, Ruby!

A *recherche* lunch followed. Mr. St. Maur shone brilliantly. Nathalie's lovely eyes were raised, and the

starry brown eyes looked at him in a perplexed, half-doubting way.

Mrs. Delmare, in the meantime, sat making weak attempts to estimate the value of so much plate and choice glass as was there displayed, and, failing to do so, was grateful when Miss Galbraith, the pretty, restless butterfly, tired of so long a rest, went dancing off on farther inspection, drawing all like a magnet, after her.

They crossed an open lawn skirted by a broad belt of oaks, part of the grounds once used as a park, and where the stag lazily lifted his head and looked at them.

Mr. St. Maur, who was in advance with Miss Lermond, had stopped by a little spring dripping from a rocky basin beneath one of the oaks, and over-arched by some rude masonry, from whose inner side a cup swung from a rusty iron chain. He was half kneeling on the turf, the white crystals dropping from the cup, which he held in one white, aristocratic hand, as he looked up, dark and smiling, into Nathalie's face.

"In my boyhood," he said, "there was a legend connected with this spring. If I do not mistake, by this well-worn path some of the hamlet lasses come hither to drink from it still."

"Oh, how charming!" cried Miss Galbraith, "pray tell us the legend."

He shook his handsome head.

"Indeed, I have forgotten it; but if youth or maiden drink three times of these waters, and while drinking wish, that wish shall prove true."

"Very pretty indeed!"

"But," said Nathalie, leaning like a water-lily over the gurgling basin, "there must be no guile in their hearts, no hidden thoughts and no past iniquities, you know."

"Ah?" said Mr. St. Maur, dryly.

"Nor must they have ever loved before," added Ruby, gently fanning her sweet, blonde face, as she peeped over Miss Lermond's shoulder.

Miss Galbraith laughed.

"Let us wish then, by all means. Mr. St. Maur, you are the cup-bearer."

"Thrice blessed," he answered, "since I serve goddesses."

"And be sure," added Miss Galbraith, wickedly, "that all the restrictions are observed."

Mr. St. Maur passed the little wooden cup to Miss Lermond.

She looked down into its depths, smiling.

"I can recall no past iniquities."

"And no blasted affections?" queried Miss Galbraith.

She shook her head.

"Then drink," said Mr. St. Maur, "and as you wish, so shall you have."

Nathalie raised the cup to her red lips.

"Good people," she said, still smiling, "I crave the boon of happiness."

Happiness for her! It was a jest indeed. What lacked she? Not youth, beauty, riches, nor yet the fawning adulation of the crowd.

Miss Galbraith shrugged her shoulders. Mr. St. Maur took the cup from Miss Lermond, his fingers just touching hers as she resigned it.

"Now," said Miss Galbraith, gaily taking it in turn, "I admit, first of all, that my conscience is not clear. *Entre nous*, I have known early loves—a score, or more, likewise flirtations, also simple and compound fractures of the heart; nevertheless, I drain this draught, desiring that my ambition henceforth be surfeited on sweets. There, Miss Hendee, advance to the confessional."

Ruby's blonde cheek flushed a little. She stood in the sunlight, a charming picture, her hat in her hand, and her golden curls afloat around her face, as with shy violet eyes she looked into the cup.

"I wish," she said, gently, just touching its brim to her lips, "for love's o'er true."

Miss Galbraith tapped her with her fan.

"My dear child, why did you not say the philosopher's stone? There is no such thing as 'o'er true love' in existence. Ask Mr. St. Maur."

Mr. St. Maur bent to refill the cup again at the brink of the basin.

"It exists," he answered, "but it is an aloe-plant, blossoming once in a hundred years."

Nathalie looked dreamily into the spring—at the cool darkness of its waters, and the white pebbles underlying all.

He was watching her with an intense, passionate face.

"Well," remarked Miss Galbraith, maliciously, "we are waiting, Mr. St. Maur; or are you, like Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche*?"

He raised, with an unsteady hand, the cup, dripping in the amber sunshine.

"My past," he said, "is sealed and buried. Let it rest. I drink now to the fulfilment of a new-made vow."

He bent down—his face was mirrored beside Nathalie's in the water, with a look upon it that she never forgot. She made one step backward, and Mr. St. Maur's draught, before a drop had touched his lips, was dashed over the margin of emerald mosses, in a sudden shower of liquid pearls. Back swung the cup into its place, under the arch of masonry. Mr. St. Maur laughed, but with a strangely pale face.

"Oh," said Miss Galbraith, "it is an evil omen."

"Let us hope not," he answered, composedly.

(To be continued.)

FACETIE.

DINNER FOR THE SULTAN.—A Turkey and a bottle of Port.

TO SMOKERS.—If two hogsheds make a pipe, how many will make a cigar?

DOMESTIC TOAST.—May your coffee and thealanders against you be ever alike—without grounds.

RECIPROCITY.—You may safely mind other people's business. They will be sure to mind yours.

LOVE'S ARTILLERY.—Capit shoots with a rifle now, and not with a bow and arrows. Else how is it that girls can hear the popping of the question?

A FRENCHMAN'S ENGLISH.

The following is a copy of a placard affixed to the breast of a figure in a suit of gray pantaloons, exhibited at the Paris Exhibition:

"ANTOINE GIGLIA, Marchand Tailleur, à Vercell.

"Dress of fancy (tout de même) with portofoglio and port-money assured in such a manner, not to can be lost nor robbed without the possessor also deeply sleepy can be perceived of it. The waistcoat contains secret pockets for papers."

CONUNDRUM BY A TRAVELLER.—Why are railroad companies like laundresses? Because they have ironed the whole country, and sometimes do a little mangling.

ROMANCE AND MATRIMONY.—The young married couple who thought they could live on love and moonlight find there is some virtue in baked beans. For taking the romance out of young folks, marriage is nearly as bad as a lawsuit.

POLITE BATHING ATTENDANT.—Oh, yes, marm! you begin to swim like a porpoise! I allus find human natur' is the same as the beasts; the fatter they are the better they float. Why there's nothin' swims nicer than a hefephant.

In order to get an enemy lend a man a small sum of money for a day. Call upon him in a week for it. Wait two months. In three months insist upon his paying you. He will get angry, denounce you, and ever after speak of you in abusive terms. We have seen this experiment tried frequently, and never knew it fail.

AT A FASHIONABLE WATERING-PLACE.

Miss Bonton: "How stupid it is here! I am so vexed to have gone to so much expense and trouble with my wardrobe! Nobody here worth dressing for!"

Mrs. Snare: "I dress to spite the women! You find they don't gossip about plainly dressed women! They'll soon make your name ring, when you outshine them!"

THE IRISHMAN AND HIS FRIEND.—Two good-natured Irishmen, on a certain occasion, occupied the same bed. In the morning one of them inquired of the other, "Dennis, did you hear the thunder last night?" "No, Pat; did it rally thunder?" "Yes, it thundered as if hiven and airth would come together." "Why in the devil, thin, didn't ye wake me for ye know I can't slape whin it thunders."

ACCEPTED BY PROXY.—A spinster went to a well-known lawyer and engaged him to manage a suit for her, in which she claimed a legacy to which her right was disputed. The suit was lost, and the poor maiden said to the lawyer, "How can I ever repay you for all the time and trouble which you have taken on my account? I have nothing but my heart to give you." "My clerk takes the fees—go to him," answered the lawyer, gruffly.

A FACETIOUS PRISONER.—The following is an exact copy of a document found in a cell of a prisoner who has just been discharged from the City Prison at Bath, after three months' imprisonment for felony:—To be Let, ready furnished, a very snug apartment in the Bath City Hotel, Twerton. The above hotel is replete with every convenience, and is situate on the rise of a lovely hill on the left of the lower Bristol Road, within 10 minutes of the station, from which a Royal Bus will convey you. The hotel has a beautiful view of Lansdown, Beacon Hill, Beechen Cliff, with the whole city of Bath like a panorama. The rustic village and mills of Twerton are within ten minutes' walk, and the healthful and soul-inspir-

ing Combe Down. The manager of the hotel, or governor, keeps it so respectable that no one is admitted as a resident without a special recommendation from the mayor and magistrates of Bath. The hotel has a spacious chapel with a visiting chaplain, and the responses are daily accompanied with about 70 nasal organs. This department, marked 26 on the plan, would suit any young man or bachelor of quiet and sedentary habits, who will find this a quiet retreat. The property is well looked after, as the doors are of iron and double locked; the windows have iron bars to keep thieves out. Apply to the mayor and magistrates.—N.B. Good attendants, and a man cook is kept.

BEAUTY.—The popular notions of beauty differ. Tamerlane's wife had no nose, yet she was thought a beauty by her friends, while a Venetian patrician with a small, insignificant nose was supposed to be too ugly in his exterior to be Doga. Cicero admired a squinting eye, and Minerva was often exhibited with a dusky complexion. Some of the Greeks detested blue eyes, and by various artful means dyed them black. Hunchbacks have also been admired, the dorsal being declared to be the line of beauty, and the hump an ornament.

MAKING THE BEST OF IT.—Those unlucky wights who are unable to run down to the seaside for a blow on the pier may still—at Covent Garden—enjoy their "promenade" and their "Jetty"—Treffz.—Fun.

"MARK YE THAT."—Messrs. Bass have an enormous album filled with the forged trade-marks of their beer, which they have collected from all parts of the world, from Britain to Japan. Such imitations may be considered tokens of admiration, but they can hardly be considered marks of regard.—Fun.

MUST HAVE BEEN BORN WITH "A CALL."—A speculator, who has been let-in over head and ears by the collapsing of limited liability companies and still survives, has cut the acquaintance of an old and valued friend simply because he happens to be, when in company, a "promoter" of harmony.—Fun.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.—A paragraph is going the rounds, stating that "birds of passage have begun their annual migration southwards." A somewhat lengthy paragraph winds up with—"This is a presage of a hard winter." Nothing of the kind! At this present writing the swallows are skimming to and fro, and show no signs of meeting for their annual flight. We suspect that paragraph—and are inclined to alter its last sentence into "That is a sign of a hard-up sub-editor."—Fun.

"BILL O' THE PLAY."—An ingenious American has invented a new style of programme for the theatres. It is made of light pastry, and the letter-press is printed in chocolate paste. The notion is pleasant, and will be very popular at Christmas, when Master Hopeful will look forward to his pantomime with more than even his ordinary "devouring anxiety." Puff paste will of course be the popular medium for advertising stars, while a heavier hand will be needed for the production of programmes for dough-mestic dramas. One comfort is that, even in cases where a new piece won't go down, its bills can be swallowed.—Fun.

NOT VERY CLEAR.—No Act of Parliament was ever drawn up through which some ingenious person or other could not drive a coach-and-four. But we fancy the New Metropolitan Management Act is the first through which an umbrella could be thrust. A bewildered constable has just applied to us for advice under the following circumstances. The Act says, "The Commissioner of Police may cause any dog which has remained in the hands of the police for three clear days, unreclaimed, to be sold or destroyed." Considering the Act first comes into force in the month of November, we think it likely that some trouble may be caused by this clause. Three clear days in London in November are almost as difficult to find as grammatical Acts of Parliament.—Fun.

A "LYON" SPIRIT.—Mr. Home, the Spiritualist, has changed his name to Lyon, or has prefixed the new title to his former, now appearing as Lyon-Home. Is Lyon correctly spelt? As far as sound goes, the marvellous Spiritualist had better have stuck to his *Home* *rect* *Home*, and have dropped an addition which sounds like a remarkably unpleasant epithet.—Punch.

A FRAT FOR THE REFORM LEAGUE.—The Reform League, the other day, at the instance of Mr. Beales, resolved on holding a meeting to express their indignation at the arrest of Garibaldi. This demonstration will doubtless exert some influence on Louis Napoleon, who has been the real cause of Garibaldi's arrest by holding the Italian Government to the September Convention. With the view

of compelling him to release Victor Emmanuel's Cabinet from that compact, the Reform League, with Beales at the head of them, should go and hold their meeting on Garibaldi's behalf in the Tuileries Gardens. Such a demonstration under the nose of the Emperor of the French would not fail to have a due effect upon him, particularly if its authors threw down the Imperial railings.—*Punch*.

"BROTHER BRUSH."

Ship-Painter: "Nice dryin' weather for our business, ain't it, sir?"

Amateur (disconcerted): "Ya-a-s"—
—*Punch*.

[Takes a dislike to the place.]

FROM "THE MILLER AND HIS MEN."—Corn is rising. Bread is dearer. Even the better classes appear to be falling into dreadful destitution, for it is no uncommon sight now to meet their wives and daughters wearing nothing but sacks.—*Punch*.

BABY-FARMING.—From the report of an inquest on an unfortunate infant, who died under the maternal care of a Baby-farm-keeper, named Jagger, we are led to the conclusion that some Britons are ready to sacrifice their children, as the Hindoos sacrifice themselves—to Jagger-naut.—*Punch*.

AN INDISPENSABLE OFFICER.—It is not true that Mr. Calcraft, the well-known finisher of the law, will be attached to the expedition which is in course of being fitted out against the King of Abyssinia. It is expected that no difficulty will be experienced in finding a hand fully competent to deal, if necessary, with that monarch in the event of his capture; and in the meanwhile the proceedings of the Fenians render it manifestly impossible that Her Majesty's Government can afford to dispense with the services of Mr. Calcraft at home.—*Punch*.

STATISTICS.

THE ENGLISH LIFE TABLE.—The last report of the Registrar General contains a series of tables extracted from the volume entitled "The English Life Table," the principal columns of which were calculated and stereographed by the Swedish calculating machine at the General Register Office. The synoptical table shows the number of males and females living and dying at each year of age as they would exist in a population under the law of birth and mortality, found by direct observation to prevail in England and Wales, undisturbed by emigration, by excess of births over deaths, or by any other element of that kind. The males it is found, if there is no emigration, exceed the females up to the age of 53, when the women, after the age of childbearing, enjoy a firmer hold on life, and die at a lower rate than the men. The tables prove decisively that the disparity in the number of the two sexes of the English population is due exclusively to emigration. It may be stated that, by the English life table, of 1,000,000 children born alive 511,745 are boys and 488,255 are girls; 428,026 boys and 422,481 girls are living at the age of one; therefore, 83,719 boys and 65,774 girls die in the first year, or, of 1,000,000 children born, 850,507 are alive at age one, 149,493 having died in the first year. At age 20, only 662,750 are alive, 337,250 having died before attaining that age, and so on. The mean lifetime of the population is 39.91 years for males, 41.85 years for females; or the mean lifetime of children born in England is 40.88 years. The mean age of those who died was 29.4; the reduction of the age at death, 11.5 years below the mean lifetime, being the result of the introduction of an excess of young lives. Thus, in addition to 380,631 births to balance 380,631 deaths, 191,068, making 571,699 children in the whole, were born annually and thrown into the population. The mean age at death has sometimes been confounded with the mean lifetime, or expectation of life. If there is no emigration or immigration, and the births and deaths are nearly equal for 100 years, the mean age at death will coincide with the mean future lifetime. Thus, if the births and deaths had for a long time been equal in England, all persons born had died in it, and no strangers had entered, or if those who entered were of the same age as those who emigrated, the mean age at death would be 40.88 years; but the births exceed the deaths, and the mean age at death, instead of 40.88 years, is 29.4 years. So likewise the probability of dying should never be confounded with the rate of mortality; thus, by the English life table 1,000,000 infants followed through their first year of age, yield 902,781 years of life; and the mortality is at the rate of 149,493 divided by 902,781—16.559. It is 16.559 per cent. per annum. The probability of dying is 149,493, and upon the erroneous assumption that this is the rate of mortality, it would be 14.949 per cent. per annum; less by 1.610 than the true rate. Until the Registration Act passed the national statistics were imper-

fect, and the old Northampton life table was found to be erroneous to an enormous extent. By the experience of observations extending over 17 years, the English life table determines in the mass the mean duration of human life, uncertain as it appears to be, and indeed as it is, with reference to individuals. The calculating machine has also been used to introduce the element of interest in the various tables. It appears that the preliminary steps of the work, such as calculating the mortality at decennial periods of age and deducing the differences, were performed without the aid of the machine, but when the differences were once obtained the machine was able to take up the work and continue the calculation by the differential method. The machine is limited to calculations involving a regular series, and, by means of logarithms, questions involving calculations in the higher branches of mathematics can be reduced to very simple formulas, and brought into such a compass as will readily admit of their insertion in the machine. The art, it has been shown, is to shape the formulas and the numerical operations so that they can be executed by the machine, which only performs the operation of addition, but by various expedients is made to perform also subtraction, multiplication, and division.

THE SILVER WEDDING.

Yes! this is my silver wedding-day,

And 'tis twenty years and more

Since I stood a bride, in white array,

In the old St. Mary's door.

And fair to see were my bridesmaids three,

Who stood closely by my side;

Smiling, chatting, and laughing were they,

To lighten the heart of the bride.

I felt all joy that bright bridal morn,

As, arrayed in purest shen,

I leant on the arm of the adored,

Who cherished his manhood's dream.

The years that have past since that fair day

Mingled joy and woe have seen,

And I have grown gray who once was gay—

But my love is ever green.

As I view the gifts before me I feel

With joy almost carried away;

I find in their midst a silver ring,

To wear on this happy day.

The glass before me shows to my gaze

A shadow stealing away;

After veiling my brow with its silvery haze,

He steals brown locks, and leaves me gray.

I care not that time has ruthlessly shorn

Tresses with which my love did play;

The morn of my life had a happy dawn,

And all clouds are silvered this day.

E. H.

GEMS.

LIFE is half spent before we know what it is.

He that would enjoy the fruit must not gather the flower.

We profit more by the faults than by the successes of others.

TIME is a travelling thief, ever stealing, yet no man can catch him.

DISCREET wives have sometimes neither eyes nor ears.

INNOCENCE is no security against temptation; it is exactly what temptation conquers.

NEITHER purity, virtue, nor liberty can long flourish where education is neglected.

THERE is a class of men ever ready to pump you to any extent, if you only give them a handle.

TRUE friendship increases as life's end approaches, just as the shadow lengthens every degree the sun declines towards setting.

THOSE who cry loudest, "Look out for deceit!" might for the most part be properly told in reply, "Look in for deceit!"

A HYPOCRITE may spin so faire a thread as to deceive his own eye. He may admire the cobweb, and not know himself to be the spider.

THE CHINA TEA RACE.—The Greenock Clipper, Taeping, is again the winner. The excitement in reference to this year's great ship race has perhaps been greater this season than in any former one. The first ship of the China tea fleet having arrived in the Downs the other day from Foo-chow-foo, and that ship being the Taeping, there is a little excuse for the outburst of enthusiasm which

has been manifested in Greenock and in Glasgow in consequence. The Taeping is a Greenock-built clipper of 767 tons register, the builders being Messrs. Robert Steel & Company, and the owners being Messrs. Rogers & Company, of Glasgow. The time taken to reach the London Docks, where she got berthed at three o'clock on the Sunday morning, was 101 days, the distance being about 14,600 miles. She brings 1,139,961 lbs. new season's tea. Last year's race was also won by the Taeping, the time then taken being 97 days. Her voyage out, however, was accomplished in even less time, namely, 85 days. The home voyage in 1865 took 115 days. The premium gained by the Taeping last year was 10s. per ton; this year there is no premium, but large sums of money have been made on the race by way of bets. The Maitland, built by Mr. Pile, of Sunderland, in 1865, and the Serica, built also by Messrs. Steel & Company, left Foo-chow-foo before the Taeping.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SEALING-WAX VARNISH.—Black, red, or any coloured sealing-wax, broken small, with enough rectified spirit (or methylated spirit) to cover it digested till dissolved. A most useful varnish for wood work of electrical or chemical apparatus, for tops of corks, &c.

ALUMINIUM BRONZE.—Aluminium bronze composed of one part aluminium and nine parts copper, is now used in substitution for steel in mechanisms exposed to much wear and tear. In punching the small holes in postage-stamps in France the perforated plate through which the needles descend was, when made of steel, worn out in a day. But, when made of aluminium bronze, it has been found to last 1,500 days.

BLACK JAPAN VARNISH.—Pitch 50 lbs., dark gum amber 8 lbs.; melt this and add linseed oil 12 gallons. Boil this and add 10 lbs. more gum amber, previously melted and boiled with 2 gallons of linseed oil, 7 lbs. each of litharge and red lead, and boil for two hours or until a little of the mass can be rolled into pills; then withdraw the fire and thin the varnish as required for use with turpentine.

MISCELLANEOUS.

DONATION FROM THE VICEROY.—The Viceroy of Egypt has presented a donation of 150*l*. to the Chichester training-ship for homeless boys.

CALIFORNIA.—California promises to become a great wine-producing country. This year there have been made there 3,800,000 gallons of wine and 100,000 gallons of brandy.

JUPITER'S MOON.—Two of the moons of Jupiter were distinctly visible in Bombay on the night of August 21, at ten o'clock, without the assistance of a telescope.

THE NEW FOREST.—The New Forest comprises 66,000 acres, which produce to the Crown at present only 22,000*l*. a year, out of which nearly 15,000*l*. is paid for management.

IMMIGRATION INTO THE UNITED STATES.—The number of immigrants who arrived at New York in the first seven months of this year was 154,299. In the corresponding period of 1866 the number was 155,799.

THE QUEEN'S PRESENT TO THE SULTAN'S SON.—The Queen has presented to the Sultan's son an album containing portraits of the Royal Family, and inscribed: "To his Imperial Highness Yousouf Izzedin Effendi, an affectionate souvenir from the Queen of England, VICTORIA."

ADULTERATION OF MILK IN BERLIN.—In Berlin the policemen of all railway and police stations, and of the market-places, have been furnished with galactometers, in order to put a stop to the adulteration of the milk, which is practised there on a great scale.

A MONSTER LOBSTER.—Recently a lobster was caught at Jonesport, Maine, which measured three feet five inches in length, nineteen and a half inches round the body, and weighed twenty-seven pounds. The largest claw weighed eight pounds fourteen ounces.

REMAINS OF NAPOLEON II.—The remains of Napoleon II. are, it is stated, to be removed from their various resting-places at Vienna, and laid in the newly restored vaults of the Abbey of St. D. of The deputation on whom will devolve the duty of conveying them has already been appointed, and consists of Marshal Regnault de St. Jean d'Angely, the Duke of Bassano, M. de Cambronne, and General Fleury. Marshal Vaillant is to preside at the funeral ceremony.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

L. W.—The first iron railway is said to have been constructed about sixty-eight years since, at Newcastle.

HARRIST BELL—Sailing vessels to Australia go by the route of the Cape of Good Hope, and return by that of Cape Horn.

ALFRED—Robespierre was executed July 28, 1794. His executioner died very recently at Noyon, in France, in his eighty-fourth year.

MARION—Hallow-eve, or Halloween, is the name given to the evening preceding All Hallows, or All Saints' Day, which occurs on the first of November.

R. S.—Neap tides are those tides which happen when the moon is in the second and third quarters; the neap tides are low tides as contrasted with their opposites, the spring tides.

L. R.—The best oil for a harness is 1 quart of neat's-foot oil, mixed with 4 oz. of melted beef fat, and 3 tablespoonfuls of lampblack. When required for use in summer, add 4 oz. of beeswax.

JANNA—Boathook is an iron hook, with a spike, fixed upon a long pole or shaft, by the help of which anyone in a boat may hook anything to confine the boat in a particular place, or push her off with the point.

X. Y. Z.—To obtain the work you mention apply to any good music-publisher, who will, without doubt, be able to supply you with it; or probably you might procure it at any ordinary music-seller's.

ANK—The best way to recover a drowning fly is the following: A fly drowned in water, wine, ale, or beer, and apparently dead, if placed in chalk crushed very fine, or warm ashes, will live again.

G. E. D.—A certain social status and interest with the Lord Lieutenant of the County, the Home Secretary, or the Lord Chancellor. It is customary to place any gentleman of standing and position in the commission of the peace.

M. B. STUART—One of the best books whereby to acquire a knowledge of the French language is "H. G. Ollendorff's method of learning to read, write, and speak it in six months," which almost any bookseller would supply you with.

VATHEAN—If for any race you backed a horse which was not entered, the bet is void, according to the first rule of betting, which reads that "in all bets there must be a possibility of winning when the bet is made; you cannot win when you cannot lose."

M. A.—Seeds which have been kept for many years, and to all appearance useless, may be restored by immersing them in oxalic acid, or by putting them in a cloth moistened with the acid; but they must be removed from the acid as soon as germination begins.

WILLIAM BOUTON.—1. To make a black dye use copperas and logwood, but the colour of the article to be dyed will be much improved by first boiling it in a decoction of galls and alder-bark. 2. Handwriting extremely good, but you should avoid so many flourishes.

D. F. M.—This correspondent's communication is so illegible that, notwithstanding the expenditure of some patience on our part, we failed to decipher the meaning. Thus we can give no answer. Correspondents expecting us to reply to their queries, should at least write legibly.

ROSE.—The precise period when fans were first used cannot be ascertained; but it is well known that they are very ancient, having been used by the ladies of Egypt and India, as well as by those of modern times, for cooling the face by agitating the air. They were originally made of feathers bound together like the tail of a peacock when spread out.

A. CONJURER.—To make an egg float in the midst of a glass of water you must first make a strong decoction of common salt by dissolving it for about half an hour in cold water, half fill the glass with this decoction, then pour carefully on it some plain water, so that the two liquids do not mix, then place the egg gently in, and it will sink as far as the salt water, and remain there.

A. BACHELOR.—1. If you intend to be married in church by ordinary licence three weeks' notice must be given; the cost of the licence will be about 2l. 10s. Marriage by banns takes the same time, as the names of each party have to be given in church for three successive Sundays; but this entails on the expense of the fees to the clerk and clergyman, and very rarely according to circumstances, but it is generally 3. One of 2. There is only one such notice necessary, in the part contracting parties alone is required to reside in the parish where the marriage is to take place, and that must be for three consecutive days. There is a civil form of marriage before a justice of the peace, which also requires three weeks' notice; this ceremony, which also requires a few ques-

tions, and making a declaration of the intention to take each other as man and wife, receiving a certificate of the marriage, which is then in every way lawful. No ring is necessary (though usual), and the fee is only a few shillings.

H. W. HOLYOAKE, STAFFORD.—The title of Viscount Stafford, who was executed in 1680, a victim of the Popish Plot, has long been extinct. The crest and armorial bearings of the family you may possibly obtain from any heraldic engraver; or, better still, from the Herald's College, Doctors' Commons, E.C.

ELIZA.—The term *overture* means an introductory symphony to an opera or oratorio. This species of composition is said to have been originated in France. Modern overtures are formed upon the subject of the opera, and generally contain snatches from the leading airs. As splendid examples of this kind of composition we may mention Mozart's overtures to *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, Weber's overture to *Der Freischütz*, and Rossini's overture to *Guillaume Tell*.

DORA.—The most delightful time of the year to enjoy a stroll amid forest scenery is the autumn, when the trees are tinted with a thousand varied hues, and the sunshine is bright and golden, and the air cool and exhilarating; when as you walk you hear the dying song of the falling and fallen leaves, and feel that all your capabilities of enjoyment must be pressed into a short space, because "fading away" is written on everything around.

MILLY.—Be not discouraged; little things and little people have often brought great things to pass. The large world in which we exist is made up of little particles as small as the sands on the sea-shore; the vast sea is composed of small drops of water. The little busy bees how much honey they gather; a little star shines brightly in the sky on a dark night, and may be the means of saving many a poor sailor from shipwreck, and a Christian with the humblest means may do a great deal of good, if only he or she will try. Remember through life there is nothing worth accomplishing achieved without some trouble.

THE SEWING-MACHINE.

Reading in the Scottish legends,
How the kindly brownie crept
To perform the housewife's labours
As by magic, while she slept.
To myself I thought each household
Where, with hands that never grow weary,
Tells this fairy enchantment,
Has a brownie in it now.
Ne'er for higher wages striking,
With its eyesight never dim,
And the secret of perpetual
Motion in its fingers slim.
Pleads this elf that, never knowing
"Hunger, poverty, and dirt,"
Never with its human sister
Sings the sad "Song of the Shirt!"

BRIGHTON YOUNG.—Take our advice, the less you know about that most despicable and irreligious of sects called the Mormons the better for your present and future, as well as all connected with you.

A SAILOR.—Captain James Cook, the celebrated circumnavigator, left Plymouth Sound in July, 1776, to effect a north-west passage from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean. He was killed by the savages at Owhyhee in 1779.

A SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER.—Write a clear statement of your case, including every particular as to Christian name, dates, and any detail with which you may be acquainted, and forward it to Field-Marshal H. R. H. the Duke of Cambridge, the Horse Guards, Whitehall, when, if you have any case, it will be promptly attended to by the Military Secretary.

JOLLY JACK.—To get into the ranks of the mounted police of Ireland you must have the interest of the chief of the corps, or a Member of Parliament. The only examination you will have to pass is that of the doctor, and the examination of your testimonials as to character and ability. 2. What folly to talk about joining the police by way of an introduction to the Life Guards. If you are physically fit for the latter regiment, apply at once to one of the sergeants at the Horse Guards, Whitehall.

VIOLET.—Needles were first made in London by a negro from Spain in the reign of Queen Mary. He died without imparting the secret of his art; it was however recovered in 1565. Elias Groves first taught the English to make needles, but the art was again lost for nearly a century, when it was once more discovered by Christopher Greening, who settled at Long Orendon, in Buckinghamshire. Needles are now chiefly made at Redditch, in Worcestershire, Hatherton, in Derbyshire, and in and near Birmingham. Some years ago 100,000,000 of needles a week were made in Redditch.

J. DIXON.—1. A good pomade may be made by dissolving thoroughly, over a slow fire, 2 oz. of white wax, with 4 oz. of palm oil, and a flask of the best olive oil; stir it till nearly cold; then add 1 oz. of castor oil, and about three-pennyworth of any kind of perfume you prefer. 2. Tooth powder may be made by burning some rock salm, beat it in a mortar and sift it very fine, then take a little rose pink mix well together, add little powder of myrrh, and put it into bottles for use. 3. Handwriting good, but might be greatly improved by practice, so as to obtain more freedom in the formation of the letters.

J. GUEST.—Severe study does not of itself shorten life, but, on the contrary, tends to increase the longevity of man. When hard students die early it will be found that in some way or other they had violated the laws of nature, or commenced study with some inherited infirmity. The pursuit of truth is pleasurable and exhilarating; it is exalting and creates serenity. Of all men natural philosophers average the longest lives; the great reason for this is, that their attention is diverted from the indulgence of animal appetites; their gratifications are not in that direction, hence they are neither gourmands, drunkards, nor given to immorality.

A. D. writes as follows:—Sir,—Some of your readers may perhaps derive benefits from the use of the following beautiful gold varnish, which does not lose its colour by the exposure to air and light, and which, if applied on tin foil, saves the use of real gold-leaf: Take 2 oz. of the best French garancine, and digest it in a glass vessel with 6 oz. of alcohol, of the specific gravity of 0.833, for twelve hours. Make a solution of clear orange-coloured shellac, with as

much alcohol, and filtered and evaporated till the lac has the consistency of a clear syrup, which is then coloured with the filtered garancine. This varnish can be assimilated to the different gold colours by the addition of a few drops of tincture of saffron.

AGNES H.—1. The colour of your hair is brown; it is fine and silky in texture. 2. The best way to improve your writing will be to procure some copy-books with printed set copies. Watch carefully the formation of the different letters, and endeavour to imitate them as closely as you can, by this means and with constant practice you cannot fail to attain your object. 3. A young girl of eighteen is decidedly not too young to marry if she possess the proper amount of sense which ought to accompany these years.

CLARA.—It is only too true that misfortunes come to us on wings, but retire with a limping pace, and yet one half the world are ready to meet calamities half way, and indirectly to welcome them. There is scarcely an evil in life that we cannot double by pondering upon it, while, on the other hand, a mind accustomed to look on the bright side of all things will repel the approach and mildew of care by its genial sunshine. A cheerful heart paints the world as it is like a sunny landscape, the morbid mind depicts it like a sterile wilderness.

FORTY.—"One of Life's Many Wees," by T. C. A., "And yet she smiled beneath her Tears," by M. Y. N., are too lengthy for our columns, therefore we must decline them with thanks. "Thoughts on Life," by C. Y., "Going Home," by F. F., "The Wedding-Bing," by Eugénie, "Shells of Ocean," and "Going to the Dogs," by H. J. H., are much better in conception than in execution, consequently, not being quite up to our standard, are also declined with thanks.

ALPHA, twenty-eight, medium height, with a salary of 80l. per annum (progressive), steady, and good tempered.

AMIC, fair, blue eyes, and good teeth. Respondent must be dark.

MURPHY P., seventeen, medium height, brown hair, gray eyes, and fond of home. Respondent must be steady and affectionate.

SUNSHADE, thirty-two. Respondent must be about forty and of quiet habits, one who would appreciate a good domesticated wife.

B. S. (a respectable mechanic), twenty-two, tall, fair, and good looking. Respondent must be dark, and about the same age, with a little money.

POLLY, twenty-one, tall, dark, an amiable disposition, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, and gentlemanly; a mechanic preferred. (Handwriting distinct and ladylike.)

EDITH MELVINA and ALICE MAUD. "Edith Melvina," eighteen, lively, good tempered, with dark hair and blue eyes. "Alice Maud," eighteen, light hair, blue eyes, and would make a good wife.

F. R. R. C. (Liverpool), twenty-two, 5 ft. 8 in., handsome, dark complexion and mustache, situation in the Civil Service, with a salary of 140l. per annum. Respondent must be well educated, and fond of music.

ALFRED WILCOCK, twenty-three, 5 ft. 6 in., slight mustache, fair, blue eyes, and a good temper. Respondent must be well educated, blue eyes, good looking, and about his own age.

MARIAN and JANET. "Marian," twenty-one, 5 ft. 3 in., fair, brown hair, gray eyes, and thinks she would make a good wife; respondent must be a tradesman. "Janet," eighteen, 5 ft. 3 in., brown hair, and gray eyes; respondent must be tall and dark.

ANNIE and KATE. "Annie," sixteen, medium height dark hair, fair, fond of home, domesticated, but no fortune. "Kate," twenty, light hair and eyes, domesticated, but no fortune. Respondents must be steady, respectable working men with a good trade.

FRISCILLA and PAULINA. "Friscilla," twenty-two, 5 ft. 3 in., dark hair, and brown eyes. "Paulina," twenty-one, 5 ft. 1 in., brown hair and eyes, both good tempered and thoroughly domesticated. Respondents must be about twenty-two or twenty-three, dark, and with a little money; sailors preferred.

CLAUDIO CICKRO, twenty-six, 5 ft. 9 in., dark, blue eyes, mustache and whiskers, and in receipt of 100l. per annum. Respondent must be nineteen or twenty-one, tall, ladylike, fair, dark hair and eyes, fond of music, and domesticated. (Handwriting would be good with a little more care bestowed upon the formation of the letters.)

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

COR (a Scotchman) is responded to by—"A. B.," seventeen, tall, fair, and pretty.

W. L. G. (the captain), by—"Constance," 5 ft. 8 in., gentle and ladylike.

T. BLACK (the tradesman), by—"Eliza Ellen," eighteen, good looking, dark hair, brown eyes, and domesticated.

ROLAND C. B. by—"E. R.," seventeen, 5 ft. 3 in., dark hair and eyes, amiable, and domesticated.

CONSTANT by—"Clara," medium height, dark brown hair, gray eyes, and domesticated. (Handwriting possesses great freedom, and is ladylike.)

A COUNTRY GIRL by—"A Young Countryman," twenty-one, 5 ft. 9 in., dark hair and eyes, and thinks he would suit her.

GERTRUDE MASON by—"H. Chester," twenty-four, 5 ft. 8 in., fair, light brown hair, and 700l. per annum.

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